

MACLEOD OF DARE.

A Novel.





MACLEOD OF DARE.



MACLEOD OF DARE.

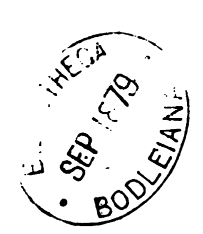
A Novel.

BY

WILLIAM BLACK,

AUTHOR OF "MADCAP VIOLET," "A PRINCESS OF THULE," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1879.

Bungay:
CLAY AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS

To my good friends J. Pettie, R.A., T. Graham, G. H. Boughton, W. Q. Orchardson, R.A., Colin Hunter, J. MacWhirter, C. E. Johnson, J. A. Aitken, T. Faed, R.A., J. E. Millais, R.A., F. Powell, and P. Graham, A.R.A., I have much pleasure in dedicating this story; and that not so much in the way of any compliment to them as to record my deep sense of gratitude to them for having turned aside from more important labours to give me each a drawing in illustration of the tale. If the book were better worthy of such distinguished collaboration, I should have less scruple — but equal pride — in placing their names on this page.

LONDON, *November, 1878.*

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

MACLEOD OF DARE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SIX BOYS OF DARE.

THE sun had sunk behind the lonely western seas; Ulva, and Lunga, and the Dutchman's Cap had grown dark on the darkening waters; and the smooth Atlantic swell was booming along the sombre caves; but up here in Castle Dare—on the high and rocky coast of Mull—the great hall was lit with such a blaze of candles as Castle Dare had but rarely seen. And yet there were no grand festivities going forward; for there were only three people seated at one end of the long and narrow table; and the banquet that the faithful Hamish had provided for them was of the most frugal kind. At the head of the table sat an old lady, with silvery-white hair and proud and fine features. It would have been a keen and haughty face but for the unutterable sadness of the eyes—blue-grey eyes under black eye-lashes, that must have been beautiful enough in her youth, but were now dimmed and worn, as if the weight of the world's sorrow had been too much for the proud, high spirit. On the right of Lady Macleod sat the last of her six sons, Keith by name, a tall, sparely-built, sinewy young fellow, with a sun-tanned cheek and crisp and curling hair; and with a happy and careless look in his clear eyes and about his mouth that rather blinded one to

the firm lines of his face. Glad youth shone there; and the health begotten of hard exposure to wind and weather. What was life to him but a laugh, so long as there was a prow to cleave the plunging seas, and a glass to pick out the branching antlers far away amid the mists of the corrie? To please his mother, on this the last night of his being at home, he wore the kilt; and he had hung his broad blue bonnet, with its sprig of juniper —the badge of the clan—on the top of one of the many pikes and halberds that stood by the great fireplace. Opposite him, on the old lady's left hand, sat his cousin, or rather half-cousin, the plain-featured but large-hearted Janet, whom the poor people about that neighbourhood regarded as being something more than any mere mortal woman. If there had been any young artist among that Celtic peasantry fired by religious enthusiasm to paint the face of a Madonna, it would have been the plain features of Janet Macleod he would have dreamed about and striven to transfer to his canvas. Her eyes were fine, it is true: they were honest and tender; they were not unlike the eyes of the grand old lady who sat at the head of the table; but, unlike hers, they were not weighted with the sorrow of years.

"It is a dark hour you have chosen to go away from your home," said the mother; and the lean hand, resting on the table before her, trembled somewhat.

"Why, mother," the young man said lightly, "you know I am to have Captain ——'s cabin as far as Greenock; and there will be plenty of time for me to put the kilt away, before I am seen by the people."

"Oh, Keith!" his cousin cried—for she was trying to be very cheerful too. "Do you say that you are ashamed of the tartan?"

"Ashamed of the tartan!" he said, with a laugh. "Is there any one who has been brought up at Dare who is likely to be ashamed of the tartan? When I am ashamed of the tartan I will put a pigeon's feather in my cap, as the new *suaicheantas* of this branch of Clann Leoid. But then, my good Janet, I would as soon think of taking my rifle and the dogs through the streets of London as of wearing the kilt in the south."

The old lady paid no heed. Her hands were now clasped before her. There was sad thinking in her eyes.

"You are the last of my six boys," said she, "and you are going away from me too."

"Now, now, mother," said he, "you must not make so much of a holiday. You would not have me always at Dare? You know that no good comes of a stay-at-home."

She knew the proverb. Her other sons had not been stay-at-homes. What had come to them?

Of Torquil, the eldest, the traveller, the dare-devil, the grave is unknown; but the story of how he met his death, in far Arizona, came years after to England, and to Castle Dare. He sold his life dearly, as became one of his race and name. When his attendants found a band of twenty Apaches riding down on them, the cowards unhitched the mules and galloped off; leaving him to confront the savages by himself. One of these, more courageous than his fellows, advanced and drew his arrow to the barb: the next second he uttered a yell, and rolled from his saddle to the ground, shot through the heart. Macleod seized this instant, when the savages were terror-stricken by the precision of the white man's weapons, to retreat a few yards and get behind a mesquit tree. Here he was pretty well sheltered from the arrows that they sent in clouds about him; while he succeeded in killing other two of his enemies who had ventured to approach. At last they rode off; and it seemed as though he would be permitted to rejoin his dastardly comrades. But the Indians had only gone to windward to set the tall grass on fire; and presently he had to scramble, burnt and blinded, up the tree, where he was an easy mark for their arrows. Fortunately, when he fell, he was dead: this was the story told by some friendly Indians to a party of white men, and subsequently brought home to Castle Dare.

The next four of the sons of Dare were soldiers, as most of the Macleods of that family had been. And if you ask about the graves of Roderick and Ronald, what is one to say? They are known, and yet unknown. The two lads were in one of the Highland regiments that served in the Crimea. They both lie buried on the bleak plains outside Sebastopol. And if the memorial stones put up to them and their brother officers are falling into ruin and decay—if the very graves have been rifled

—how is England to help that? England is the poorest country in the world. There was a talk some two or three years ago of putting up a monument on Cathcart Hill to the Englishmen who died in the Crimea; and that at least would have been some token of remembrance, even if we could not collect the scattered remains of our slain sons, as the French have done. But then that monument would have cost 5000*l.* How could England afford 5000*l.*? When a big American city takes fire, or when a district in France is inundated, she can put her hand into her pocket deeply enough; but how can we expect so proud a mother to think twice about her children who perished in fighting for her? Happily, the dead are independent of forgetfulness.

Olaus the Fair-haired lies buried in a jungle on the African coast. He was only twenty-three when he was killed; but he knew he had got the Victoria Cross. As he lay dying, he asked whether the people in England would send it to his mother, showing that his last fancies were still about Castle Dare.

And Hector? As you cross the river at Sadowa, and pass through a bit of forest, some corn-fields begin to appear, and these stretch away up to the heights of Chlum. Along the ridge there, by the side of the wood, are many mounds of earth. Over the grave of Hector Macleod is no proud and pathetic inscription such as marks the last resting-place of the young lieutenant who perished at Gravelotte—*Er ruht sanft in wiedererkampfter Deutscher Erde;* but the young Highland officer was well-beloved by his comrades, and when the dead were being pitched into the great holes dug for them, and when rude hands were preparing the simple record, painted on a wooden cross, "*Hier liegen — tapfere Krieger,*" a separate memento was placed over the grave of Under-Lieutenant Hector Macleod of the ——th Imperial and Royal Cavalry Regiment. He was one of the two sons who had not inherited the title. Was it not a proud boast for this white-haired lady in Mull that she had been the mother of four baronets? What other mother in all the land could say as much? And yet it was that that had dimmed and saddened the beautiful eyes.

And now her youngest—her Benjamin—her best-beloved—he was going away from her too. It was not enough that the big deer-forest, the last of the possessions of the Macleods of Dare, had been kept intact for him, when the letting of it to a rich Englishman would greatly have helped the failing fortunes of the family; it was not enough that the poor people about, knowing Lady Macleod's wishes, had no thought of keeping a salmon-spear hidden in the thatch of their cottages. Salmon and stag could no longer bind him to the place. The young blood stirred. And when he asked her what good thing came of being a stay-at-home, what could she say?

Suddenly old Hamish threw wide the oaken doors at the end of the hall; and there was a low roar like the roaring of lions. And then a young lad, with the pipes proudly perched on his shoulder, marched in with a stately step, and joyous and shrill arose the Salute. Three times he marched round the long and narrow hall, finishing behind Keith Macleod's chair. The young man turned to him.

"It was well played, Donald," said he, in the Gaelic, "and I will tell you that the Skye College in the old times never turned out a better pupil. And will you take a glass of whisky now, or a glass of claret? And it is a great pity your hair is red; or they would call you Donull Dubh, and people would say you were the born successor of the last of the MacCruimins."

At this praise—imagine telling a piper-lad that he was a fit successor of the MacCruimins, the hereditary pipers of the Macleods!—the young stripling blushed hot; but he did not forget his professional dignity for all that. And he was so proud of his good English that he replied in that tongue.

"I will take a glass of the claret wine, Sir Keith," said he.

Young Macleod took up a horn tumbler, rimmed with silver, and having the triple-towered castle of the Macleods engraved on it, and filled it with wine. He handed it to the lad.

"I drink your health, Lady Macleod," said he, when he had removed his cap, "and I drink your health, Miss Macleod; and I drink your health, Sir Keith; and I would have a lighter heart this night if I was going with you away to England."

It was a bold demand.

"I cannot take you with me, Donald; the Macleods have got out of the way of taking their piper with them now. You must stay and look after the dogs."

"But you are taking Oscar with you, Sir Keith."

"Yes, I am. I must make sure of having one friend with me in the south."

"And I think I would be better than a collie," muttered the lad to himself, as he moved off in a proud and hurt way towards the door, his cap still in his hand.

And now a great silence fell over these three; and Janet Macleod looked anxiously towards the old lady, who sat unmoved in the face of the ordeal through which she knew she must pass. It was an old custom that each night a pibroch should be played in Castle Dare in remembrance of her five slain sons; and yet on this one night her niece would fain have seen that custom abandoned. For was not the pibroch the famous and pathetic *Cumhadh na Cloinne*, the Lament for the Children, that Patrick Mòr, one of the pipers of Macleod of Skye, had composed to the memory of his seven sons, who had all died within one year? And now the doors were opened, and the piper-boy once more entered. The wild, sad wail arose; and slow and solemn was the step with which he walked up the hall. Lady Macleod sat calm and erect, her lips proud and firm, but her lean hands were working nervously together; and at last, when the doors were closed on the slow and stately and mournful "Lament for the Children," she bent down the silvery head on those wrinkled hands, and wept aloud. Patrick Mòr's seven brave sons could have been no more to him than her six tall lads had been to her; and now the last of them was going away from her.

"Do you know," said Janet quickly, to her cousin across the table, "that it is said no piper in the west Highlands can play 'Lord Lovat's Lament' like our Donald?"

"Oh, yes, he plays it very well; and he has got a good step," Macleod said. "But you will tell him to play no more Laments to-night. Let him take to strathspeys if any of the lads come up after bringing back the boat. It will be time enough for him to make a Lament for me when I am dead. Come, mother, have you no message for Norman Ogilvie?"

The old lady had nerved herself again, though her hands were still trembling.

"I hope he will come back with you, Keith," she said.

"For the shooting? No, no, mother. He is not fit for the shooting about here: I have seen that long ago. Do you think he could lie for an hour in a wet bog? It was up at Fort William I saw him last year; and I said to him 'Do you wear gloves at Aldershot?' His hands were as white as the hands of a woman."

"It is no woman's hand you have, Keith," his cousin said; "it is a soldier's hand."

"Yes," said he, with his face flushing, "and if I had had Norman Ogilvie's chance——"

But he paused. Could he reproach this old dame, on the very night of his departure, with having disappointed all those dreams of military service and glory that are almost the natural inheritance of a Macleod of the Western Highlands? If he was a stay-at-home at least his hands were not white. And yet, when young Ogilvie and he studied under the same tutor—the poor man had to travel eighteen miles between the two houses, many a time in hard weather—all the talk and aspirations of the boys were about a soldier's life; and Macleod could show his friend the various trophies and curiosities sent home by his elder brothers from all parts of the world. And now the lily-fingered and gentle-natured Ogilvie was at Aldershot; while he—what else was he than a mere deer-stalker and salmon-killer.

"Ogilvie has been very kind to me, mother," he said, laughing. "He has sent me a list of places in London where I am to get my clothes, and boots, and a hat; and by the time I have done that he will be up from Aldershot, and will lead me about—with a string round my neck, I suppose, lest I should bite somebody."

"You could not go better to London than in your own tartan," said the proud mother; "and it is not for an Ogilvie to say how a Macleod shall be dressed. But it is no matter. One after the other has gone; the house is left empty at last. And they all went away like you, with a laugh on their face. It was but a trip, a holiday, they said: they would soon be back to Dare. And where are they this night?"

Old Hamish came in.

"It will be time for the boat now, Sir Keith, and the men are down at the shore."

He rose, the handsome young fellow, and took his broad blue bonnet with the badge of juniper.

"Good-bye, Cousin Janet," said he lightly. "Good-bye, mother—you are not going to send me away in this sad fashion? What am I to bring you back? A satin gown from Paris? or a young bride to cheer up the old house?"

She took no heed of the passing jest. He kissed her, and bade her good-bye once more. The clear stars were shining over Castle Dare, and over the black shadows of the mountains, and the smoothly swelling waters of the Atlantic. There was a dull booming of the waves along the rocks.

He had thrown his plaid around him, and he was wondering to himself as he descended the steep path to the shore. He could not believe that the two women were really saddened by his going to the south for a while; he was not given to forebodings. And he had nearly reached the shore when he was overtaken by some one running with a light step behind him. He turned quickly, and found his cousin before him, a shawl thrown round her head and shoulders.

"Oh, Keith!" said she, in a bright and matter-of-fact way, "I have a message for you—from myself—and I did not want auntie to hear, for she is very proud, you know, and I hope you won't be. You know we are all very poor, Keith; and yet you must not want money in London, if only for the sake of the family; and you know I have a little, Keith—and I want you to take it. You won't mind my being frank with you. I have written a letter."

She had the envelope in her hand.

"And if I would take money from any one it would be from you, Cousin Janet; but I am not so selfish as that. What would all the poor people do if I were to take your money to London and spend it?"

"I have kept a little," said she, "and it is not much that is needed. It is 2000*l*. I would like you to take from me, Keith; I have written a letter."

"Why, bless me, Janet, that is nearly all the money you've got!"

"I know it."

"Well, I may not be able to earn any money for myself, but at least I would not think of squandering your little fortune. No, no; but I thank you all the same, Janet; and I know that it is with a free heart that you offer it."

"But this is a favour, Keith," said she. "I do not ask you to spend the money. But you might be in trouble; and you would be too proud to ask any one—perhaps you would not even ask me; and here is a letter that you can keep till then, and if you should want the money you can open the letter, and it will tell you how to get it."

"And it is a poor forecast you are making, Cousin Janet," said he cheerfully. "I am to play the prodigal son, then? But I will take the letter. And good-bye again, Janet; and God bless you, for you are a kind-hearted woman."

She went swiftly up to Castle Dare again, and he walked on towards the shore. By and by he reached a small stone pier that ran out among some rocks, and by the side of it lay a small sailing-launch, with four men in her, and Donald the piper-boy perched up at the bow. There was a lamp swinging at her mast, but she had no sail up, for there was scarcely any wind.

"Is it time to go out now?" said Macleod to Hamish, who stood waiting on the pier, having carried down his master's portmanteau.

"Ay, it will be time now, even if you will wait a little," said Hamish; and then the old man added, "It is a dark night, Sir Keith, for your going away from Castle Dare."

"And it will be the brighter morning when I come back," answered the young man, for he could not mistake the intention of the words.

"Yes, indeed, Sir Keith; and now you will go into the boat, and you will take care of your footing, for the night it is ferry dark, and the rocks they are always slippery whatever."

But Keith Macleod's foot was as familiar with the soft seaweed of the rocks as it was with the hard heather of the hills; and he found no difficulty in getting into the broad-beamed boat. The

men put out their oars, and pushed her off. And now, in the dark night the skirl of the pipes arose again; and it was no stately and mournful lament that young Donald played up there at the bow, as the four oars struck the sea, and sent a flash of white fire down into the deeps.

"Donald," Hamish had said to him, on the shore, "when you are going out to the steamer, it is the *79th's Farewell to Chubralter* that you will play; and you will play no other thing than that." And surely the 79th were not sorry to leave Gibraltar when their piper composed for them so glad a farewell.

At the high windows of Castle Dare the mother stood, and her niece; and as they watched the yellow lamp move slowly out from the black shore they heard this proud and joyous march that Donald was playing to herald the approach of his master. They listened to it as it grew fainter and fainter, and as the small yellow star, trembling over the dark waters, became more and more remote. And then this other sound: this blowing of a steam-whistle, far away in the darkness?

"He will be in good time, aunt; she is a long way off yet," said Janet Macleod; but the mother did not speak.

Out there, on the dark and moving waters, the great steamer was slowing drawing near the open boat; and, as she came up, the vast hull of her, seen against the starlit sky, seemed a mountain.

"Now, Donald," Macleod called out, "you will take the dog; here is the string; and you will see he does not spring into the water."

"Yes, I will take the dog," muttered the boy, half to himself. "Oh, yes, I will take the dog; but it was better if I was going with you, Sir Keith, than any dog."

A rope was thrown out, the boat dragged up to the side of the steamer, the small gangway let down, and presently Macleod was on the deck of the large vessel. Then Oscar was hauled up too, and the rope flung loose; and the boat drifted away into the darkness. But the last good-bye had not been said, for over the black waters came the sound of the pipes once more, the melancholy wail of the *Mackintosh's Lament.*

"Confound that obstinate brat!" Macleod said to himself. "Now he will go back to Castle Dare, and make the women miserable."

"The captain is below at his supper, Sir Keith," said the mate. "Will you go down to him?"

"Yes, I will go down to him," said he, and he made his way along the deck of the steamer.

He was arrested by the sound of some one crying, and he looked down and found a woman crouched under the bulwarks, with two small children asleep on her knee.

"My good woman, what is the matter with you?" said he.

"The night is cold," she said in the Gaelic, "and my children are cold; and it is a long way that we are going."

He answered her in her own tongue.

"You will be warmer if you go below; but here is a plaid for you anyway," and with that he took the plaid from round his shoulders and flung it across the children, and passed on.

That was the way of the Macleods of Dare. They had a royal manner with them. Perhaps that was the reason that their revenues were now far from royal.

And meanwhile the red light still burned in the high windows of Castle Dare, and two women were there looking out on the pale stars and the dark sea beneath. They waited until they heard the plashing of oars in the small bay below, and the message was brought them that Sir Keith had got safely on board the great steamer. Then they turned away from the silent and empty night, and one of them was weeping bitterly.

"It is the last of my six sons that has gone from me," she said, coming back to the old refrain, and refusing to be comforted.

"And I have lost my brother," said Janet Macleod, in her simple way. "But he will come back to us, auntie; and then we shall have great doings at Castle Dare."

CHAPTER II.

MENTOR.

It was with a wholly indescribable surprise and delight that Macleod came upon the life and stir and gaiety of London in the sweet June time, when the parks and gardens and squares would of themselves have been a sufficient wonder to him. The change from the sombre shores of Lochs na Keal, and Tua, and Scridain to this world of sunlit foliage—the golden yellow of the laburnum, the cream-white of the chestnut, the rose-pink of the red hawthorn, and everywhere the keen translucent green of the young lime-trees—was enough to fill the heart with joy and gladness, though he had been no diligent student of landscape and colour. The few days he had to spend by himself—while getting properly dressed to satisfy the demands of his friend—passed quickly enough. He was not at all ashamed of his country-made clothes as he watched the whirl of carriages in Piccadilly, or lounged under the elms of Hyde Park, with his beautiful silver-white and lemon-coloured collie attracting the admiration of every passer-by. Nor had he waited for the permission of Lieutenant Ogilvie to make his entrance into at least one little corner of society. He was recognised in St. James's Street one morning by a noble lady whom he had met once or twice at Inverness; and she, having stopped her carriage, was pleased to ask him to lunch with herself and her husband next day. To the great grief of Oscar, who had to be shut up by himself, Macleod went up next day to Brook Street, and there met several people whose names he knew as representatives of old Highland families, but who were very English, as it seemed to him, in their speech and ways. He was rather petted, for he was a handsome lad; and he had high spirits and a proud air. And his hostess was so kind as to mention that the Caledonian Ball was coming off on the 25th; and of course he must come, in the Highland costume; and, as she was one of the patronesses, should she give him a voucher? Macleod answered laugh-

ingly, that he would be glad to have it, though he did not know what it was; whereupon she was pleased to say that no wonder he laughed at the notion of a voucher being wanted for any Macleod of Dare.

One morning a good-looking and slim young man knocked at the door of a small house in Bury Street, St. James's, and asked if Sir Keith Macleod was at home. The servant said he was; and the young gentleman entered. He was a most correctly-dressed person. His hat, and gloves, and cane, and long-tailed frock-coat were all beautiful; but it was perhaps the tightness of his nether garments, or perhaps the tightness of his brilliantly polished boots (which were partially covered by white gaiters), that made him go up the narrow little stairs with some precision of caution. The door was opened and he was announced.

"My dear old boy," said he, "how do you do?"—and Macleod gave him a grip of the hand that nearly burst one of his gloves.

But at this moment an awful accident occurred. From behind the door of the adjacent bedroom Oscar the collie sprang forward with an angry growl; then he seemed to recognise the situation of affairs when he saw his master holding the stranger's hand; then he began to wag his tail; then he jumped up with his forepaws to give a kindly welcome.

"Hang it all, Macleod!" young Ogilvie cried, with all the precision gone out of his manner. "Your dog's all wet! What's the use of keeping a brute like that about the place?"

Alas! the beautiful, brilliant boots were all besmeared, and the white gaiters too, and the horsy-looking nether garments. Moreover, the Highland savage, so far from betraying compunction, burst into a roar of laughter.

"My dear fellow," he cried, "I put him in my bedroom to dry: I couldn't do more—could I? He has just been in the Serpentine."

"I wish he was there now, with a stone and a string round his neck," observed Lieutenant Ogilvie, looking at his boots; but he repented him of this rash saying, for within a week he had offered Macleod twenty pounds for the dog. He might have offered twenty dozen of twenty pounds, and thrown his

polished boots and his gaiters too into the bargain, and he would have had the same answer.

Oscar was once more banished into the bedroom; and Mr. Ogilvie sat down, pretending to take no more notice of his boots. Macleod put some sherry on the table and a handful of cigars; his friend asked whether he could not have a glass of seltzer-water and a cigarette.

"And how do you like the rooms I got for you?"

"There is not much fresh air about them, nor in this narrow street," Macleod said frankly, "but that is no matter, for I have been out all day—all over London."

"I thought the price was as high as you would care to go," Ogilvie said, "but I forgot you had come fresh up, with your pockets full of money. If you would like something a trifle more princely, I'll put you up to it."

"And where have I got the money? There are no gold mines in the west of Mull. It is you who are Fortunatus."

"By Jove, if you knew how hard a fellow is run at Aldershot!" Mr. Ogilvie remarked confidentially. "You would scarcely believe it. Every new batch of fellows who come in have to be dined all round; and the mess-bills are simply awful. It's getting worse and worse; and then these big drinks put one off one's work so."

"You are studying hard, I suppose?" Macleod said, quite gravely.

"Pretty well," said he, stretching out his legs, and petting his pretty moustache with his beautiful white hand. Then he added suddenly, surveying the brown-faced and stalwart young fellow before him, "By Jove, Macleod! I'm glad to see you in London. It's like a breath of mountain air. Don't I remember the awful mornings we've had together—the rain and the mist and the creeping through the bogs? I believe you did your best to kill me. If I hadn't had the constitution of a horse I should have been killed."

"I should say your big drinks at Aldershot were more likely to kill you than going after the deer," said Macleod. "And will you come up with me this autumn, Ogilvie? The mother will be glad to see you, and Janet too; though we haven't got

any fine young ladies for you to make love to, unless you go up to Fort William, or Fort George, or Inverness. And I was all over the moors before I came away; and if there is anything like good weather, we shall have plenty of birds this year, for I never saw before such a big average of eggs in the nests."

"I wonder you don't let part of that shooting," said Ogilvie, who knew well of the straitened circumstances of the Macleods of Dare.

"The mother wouldn't have it done," said Macleod, quite simply, "for she thinks it keeps me at home. But a young man cannot always stay at home. It is very good for you, Ogilvie, that you have brothers."

"Yes, if I had been the eldest of them," said Mr. Ogilvie. "It is a capital thing to have younger brothers; it isn't half so pleasant when you are the younger brother."

"And will you come up, then, and bury yourself alive at Dare?"

"It is awfully good of you to ask me, Macleod; and if I can manage it I will; but I am afraid there isn't much chance this year. In the mean time, let me give you a hint. In London, we talk of going *down* to the Highlands."

"Oh, do you? I did not think you were so stupid," Macleod remarked.

"Why, of course we do. You speak of going up to the capital of a country, and of going down to the provinces."

"Perhaps you are right—no doubt you are right; but it sounds stupid," the unconvinced Highlander observed again. "It sounds stupid to say going up to the south, and going down to the north. And how can you go down to the Highlands? you might go down to the Lowlands. But no doubt you are right; and I will be particular. And will you have another cigarette? and then we will go out for a walk and Oscar will get drier in the street than indoors."

"Don't imagine that I'm going out to have that dog plunging about among my feet," said Ogilvie. "But I have something else for you to do. You know Colonel Ross of Duntorme?"

"I have heard of him."

"His wife is an awfully nice woman, and would like to meet

you. I fancy they think of buying some property—I am not sure it isn't an island—in your part of the country; and she has never been to the Highlands at all. I was to take you down with me to lunch with her at two, if you care to go. There is her card."

Macleod looked at the card.

"How far is Prince's Gate from here?" he asked.

"A mile and a half, I should say."

"And it is now twenty minutes to two," said he, rising. "It will be a nice smart walk."

"Thank you," said Mr. Ogilvie, "if it is all the same to you we will perform the journey in a hansom. I am not in training just at present for your tramps to Ben-an-Sloich."

"Ah! your boots are rather tight," said Macleod, with grave sympathy.

They got into a hansom, and went spinning along through the crowd of carriages on this brilliant morning. The busy streets, the handsome women, the fine buildings, the bright and beautiful foliage of the parks—all these were a perpetual wonder and delight to the new comer, who was as eager in the enjoyment of this gay world of pleasure and activity as any girl come up for her first season. Perhaps this notion occurred to the astute and experienced Lieutenant Ogilvie, who considered it his duty to warn his youthful and ingenuous friend.

"Mrs. Ross is a very handsome woman," he remarked.

"Indeed."

"And uncommonly fascinating too, when she likes."

"Really?"

"You had better look out if she tries to fascinate you."

"She is a married woman," said Macleod.

"They are always the worst," said this wise person; "for they are jealous of the younger women"——

"Oh, that is all nonsense," said Macleod, bluntly. "I am not such a greenhorn. I have read all that kind of talk in books and magazines—it is ridiculous. Do you think I will believe that married women have so little self-respect as to make themselves the laughing-stock of men?"

"My dear fellow, they have cart-loads of self-respect. What

I mean is, that Mrs. Ross is a bit of a lion-hunter; and she may take a fancy to make a lion of you"——

"That is better than to make an ass of me, as you suggested."

"And naturally she will try to attach you to her set. I don't think you are quite *outré* enough for her; perhaps I made a mistake in putting you into decent clothes. You wouldn't have time to get into your kilt now? But you must be prepared to meet all sorts of queer folks at her house—especially if you stay on a bit and have some tea—mysterious poets that nobody ever heard of, and artists who won't exhibit, and awful swells from the German Universities, and I don't know what besides—everybody who isn't the least like anybody else."

"And what is your claim, then, to go there?" Macleod asked.

"Oh," said the young lieutenant, laughing at the home-thrust, "I am only admitted on sufferance, as a friend of Colonel Ross. She never asked *me* to put my name in her autograph book. But I have done a bit of the jackal for her once or twice, when I happened to be on leave; and she has sent me with people to her box at Covent Garden when she couldn't go herself."

"And how am I to propitiate her? What am I to do?"

"She will soon let you know how you strike her. Either she will pet you, or she will snuff you out like winking. I don't know a woman who has a blanker stare, when she likes."

This idle conversation was suddenly interrupted. At the same moment both young men experienced a sinking sensation, as if the earth had been cut away from beneath their feet; then there was a crash, and they were violently thrown against each other; then they vaguely knew that the cab, heeling over, was being jolted along the street by a runaway horse. Fortunately the horse could not run very fast; for the axle-tree, deprived of its wheel, was tearing at the road; but all the same the occupants of the cab thought they might as well get out, and so they tried to force open the two small panels of the door in front of them. But the concussion had so jammed these together that, shove at them as they might, they would not yield. At this juncture, Macleod, who was not accustomed to hansom cabs, and did not at all like this first experience of them, determined to get out somehow; and so he raised himself a bit, so as to get his back

firm against the back of the vehicle; he pulled up his leg until his knee almost touched his mouth; he got the heel of his boot firmly fixed on the top edge of the door; and then with one forward drive he tore the panel right away from its hinges. The other was, of course, flung open at once. Then he grasped the brass rail outside, steadied himself for a moment, and jumped clear from the cab, alighting on the pavement. Strange to say, Ogilvie did not follow; though Macleod, as he rushed along to try to get hold of the horse, momentarily expected to see him jump out. His anxiety was of short duration. The axle-tree caught on the curb; there was a sudden lurch; and then with a crash of glass, the cab went right over, throwing down the horse and pitching the driver into the street. It was all the work of a few seconds, and another second seemed to suffice to collect a crowd, even in this quiet part of Kensington. But after all very little damage was done, except to the horse, which had cut one of its hocks. When young Mr. Ogilvie scrambled out and got on to the pavement, instead of being grateful that his life had been spared, he was in a towering passion—with whom or what he knew not.

"Why didn't you jump out?" said Macleod to him, after seeing that the cabman was all right.

Ogilvie did not answer; he was looking at his besmeared hands and dishevelled clothes.

"Confound it," said he, "what's to be done now? The house is just round the corner."

"Let us go in and they will lend you a clothes-brush."

"As if I had been fighting a bargee? No, thank you. I will go along till I find some tavern, and get myself put to rights."

And this he did, gloomily; Macleod accompanying him. It was about a quarter of an hour before he had completed his toilet; and then they set out to walk back to Prince's Gate. Mr. Ogilvie was in a better humour.

"What a fellow you are to jump, Macleod!" said he. "If you had cannoned against that policeman, you would have killed him. And you never paid the cabman for destroying the lid of the door; you prized the thing clean off its hinges. You must have the strength of a giant."

"But where the people came from, it was that surprised me," said Macleod, who seemed to have rather enjoyed the adventure, "it was like one of our sea-lochs in the Highlands—you look all round and cannot find any gull anywhere—but throw a biscuit or two into the water, and you will find them appearing from all quarters at once. As for the door, I forgot that; but I gave the man half-a-sovereign to console him for his shaking. Was not that enough?"

"We shall be frightfully late for luncheon," said Mr. Ogilvie, with some concern.

CHAPTER III.

FIONAGHAL.

And indeed when they entered the house—the balconies and windows were a blaze of flowers all shining in the sun—they found that their host and hostess had already come down-stairs and were seated at table with their small party of guests. This circumstance did not lessen Sir Keith Macleod's trepidation; for there is no denying the fact that the young man would rather have faced an angry bull on a Highland road than this party of people in the hushed and semi-darkened and flower-scented room. It seemed to him that his appearance was the signal for a confusion that was equivalent to an earthquake. Two or three servants—all more solemn than any clergyman—began to make new arrangements; a tall lady, benign of aspect, rose and most graciously received him; a tall gentleman, with a grey moustache, shook hands with him; and then, as he vaguely heard young Ogilvie, at the other end of the room, relate the incident of the upsetting of the cab, he found himself seated next to this benign lady, and apparently in a bewildering Paradise of beautiful lights and colours and delicious odours. Asparagus soup? Yes, he would take that; but for a second or two this spacious and

darkened room, with its stained glass and its sombre walls, and the table before him, with its masses of roses and lilies of the valley, its silver, its crystal, its nectarines, and cherries, and pine-apples, seemed some kind of enchanted place. And then the people talked in a low and hushed fashion; and the servants moved silently and mysteriously; and the air was languid with the scents of fruits and flowers. They gave him some wine in a tall green glass that had transparent lizards crawling up its stem; he had never drunk out of a thing like that before.

"It was very kind of Mr. Ogilvie to get you to come; he is a very good boy; he forgets nothing," said Mrs. Ross to him; and as he became aware that she was a pleasant-looking lady of middle age, who regarded him with very friendly and truthful eyes, he vowed to himself that he would bring Mr. Ogilvie to task for respresenting this decent and respectable woman as a graceless and dangerous coquette. No doubt she was the mother of children. At her time of life she was better employed in the nursery or in the kitchen than in flirting with young men; and could he doubt that she was a good house-mistress when he saw with his own eyes how spick and span everything was, and how accurately everything was served? Even if his cousin Janet lived in the south, with all these fine flowers and hot-house fruits to serve her purpose, she could not have done better. He began to like this pleasant-eyed woman, though she seemed delicate and a trifle languid, and in consequence he sometimes could not quite make out what she said. But then he noticed that the other people talked in this limp fashion too: there was no precision about their words; frequently they seemed to leave you to guess the end of their sentences. As for the young lady next him, was she not very delicate also? He had never seen such hands—so small, and fine, and white. And although she talked only to her neighbour on the other side of her, he could hear that her voice, low and musical as it was, was only a murmur.

"Miss White and I," said Mrs. Ross to him—and at this moment the young lady turned to them—"were talking before you came in of the beautiful country you must know so well, and of its romantic stories and associations with Prince Charlie. Gertrude, let me introduce Sir Keith Macleod to you. I told

Miss White you might come to us to-day; and she was saying what a pity it was that Flora Macdonald was not a Macleod."

"That was very kind," said he, frankly, turning to this tall, pale girl, with the rippling hair of golden-brown and the heavy-lidded and downcast eyes. And then he laughed. "We would not like to steal the honour from a woman, even though she was a Macdonald; and you know the Macdonalds and the Macleods were not very friendly in the old time. But we can claim something, too, about the escape of Prince Charlie, Mrs Ross. After Flora Macdonald had got him safe from Harris to Skye, she handed him over to the sons of Macleod of Raasay, and it was owing to them that he got to the mainland. You will find many people up there to this day who believe that if Macleod of Macleod had gone out in '45 Prince Charlie would never have had to flee at all. But I think the Macleods had done enough for the Stuarts; and it was but little thanks they ever got in return, so far as I could ever hear. Do you know, Mrs. Ross, my mother wears mourning every 3rd of September, and will eat nothing from morning till night? It is the anniversary of the Battle of Worcester; and then the Macleods were so smashed up that for a long time the other clans relieved them from military service."

"You are not much of a Jacobite, Sir Keith?" said Mrs. Ross, smiling.

"Only when I hear a Jacobite song sung," said he. "Then who can fail to be a Jacobite?"

He had become quite friendly with this amiable lady. If he had been afraid that his voice, in these delicate southern ears, must sound like the first guttural drone of Donald's pipes at Castle Dare, he had speedily lost that fear. The manly, sun-browned face and clear-glancing eyes were full of animation; he was oppressed no longer by the solemnity of the servants; so long as he talked to her he was quite confident; he had made friends with this friendly woman. But he had not as yet dared to address the pale girl who sat on his right, and who seemed so fragile, and beautiful, and distant in manner.

"After all," said he to Mrs. Ross, "there were no more Highlanders killed in the cause of the Stuarts than used to be

killed every year or two merely out of the quarrels of the clans among themselves. All about where I live there is scarcely a rock or a loch or an island that has not its story. And I think," added he, with a becoming modesty, "that the Macleods were by far the most treacherous, and savage, and bloodthirsty of the whole lot of them."

And now the fair stranger beside him addressed him for the first time; and as she did so she turned her eyes towards him—clear, large eyes that rather startled one when the heavy lids were lifted, so full of expression were they.

"I suppose," said she, with a certain demure smile, "you have no wild deeds done there now?"

"Oh, we have become quite peaceable folks now," said he, laughing. "Our spirit is quite broken. The wild boars are all away from the islands now, even from Muick. We have only the sheep. And the Mackenzies, and the Macleans, and the Macleods—they are all sheep now."

Was it not quite obvious? How could any one associate with this bright-faced young man the fierce traditions of hate, and malice, and revenge, that make the seas and islands of the north still more terrible in their loneliness? Those were the days of strong wills and strong passions, and of an easy disregard of individual life when the gratification of some set desire was near. What had this Macleod to do with such scorching fires of hate and of love? He was playing with a silver fork and half-a-dozen strawberries: Miss White's surmise was perfectly natural and correct.

The ladies went up-stairs; and the men, after the claret had gone round, followed them. And now it seemed to this rude Highlander that he was only going from wonder to wonder. Half-way up the narrow staircase was a large recess, dimly lit by the sunlight falling through stained glass; and there was a small fountain playing in the middle of this grotto; and all around was a wilderness of ferns dripping with the spray, while at the entrance two stone figures held up magical globes, on which the springing and falling water was reflected. Then from this partial gloom he emerged into the drawing-room—a dream of rose-pink and gold; with the air sweetened around him by the masses of

roses and tall lilies about. His eyes were rather bewildered at first; the figures of the women seemed dark against the white lace of the windows. But as he went forward to his hostess he could make out still further wonders of colour: for in the balconies outside, in the full glare of the sun, were geraniums and lobelias and golden calceolarias and red snap-dragon; their bright hues faintly tempered by the thin curtains through which they were seen. He could not help expressing his admiration of these things that were so new to him; for it seemed to him that he had come into a land of perpetual summer and sunshine and glowing flowers. Then the luxuriant greenness of the foliage on the other side of Exhibition Road—for Mrs. Ross's house faced westward—was, as he said, singularly beautiful to one accustomed to the windy skies of the western isles.

"But you have not seen our elm," said Mrs. Ross, who was arranging some azaleas that had just been sent her. "We are very proud of our elm. Gertrude, will you take Sir Keith to see our noble elm?"

He had almost forgotten who Gertrude was; but the next second he recognized the low and almost timid voice that said—

"Will you come this way, then, Sir Keith?"

He turned, and found that it was Miss White who spoke. How was it that this girl, who was only a girl, seemed to do things so easily, and gently, and naturally—without any trace of embarrassment or self-consciousness? He followed her, and knew not which to admire the more—the careless simplicity of her manner, or the singular symmetry of her tall and slender figure. He had never seen any statue or any picture in any book to be compared with this woman, who was so fine and rare and delicate that she seemed only a beautiful tall flower in this garden of flowers. There was a strange simplicity, too, about her dress—a plain, tight-fitting, tight-sleeved dress of unrelieved black; her only adornment being some bands of big blue beads worn loosely round the neck. The black figure, in this shimmer of rose-pink and gold and flowers, was effective enough; but even the finest of pictures, or the finest of statues, has not the subtle attraction of a graceful carriage. Macleod had never seen any woman walk as this woman walked, in so stately and yet so simple a way.

From Mrs. Ross's chief drawing-room they passed into an ante-drawing-room, which was partly a passage and partly a conservatory. On the window-side were some rows of Cape heaths; on the wall-side some rows of blue and white plates; and it was one of the latter that was engaging the attention of two persons in this ante-room — Colonel Ross himself, and a little old gentleman in gold-rimmed spectacles.

"Shall I introduce you to my father?" said Miss White to her companion; and, after a word or two, they passed on.

"I think papa is invaluable to Colonel Ross," said she; "he is as good as an auctioneer at telling the value of china. Look at this beautiful heath. Mrs. Ross is very proud of her heaths."

The small white fingers scarcely touched the beautiful blossoms of the plant; but which were the more palely roseate and waxen? If one were to grasp that hand—in some sudden moment of entreaty—in the sharp joy of reconciliation—in the agony of farewell—would it not be crushed like a frail flower?

"There is our elm," said she, lightly. "Mrs. Ross and I regard it as our own; we have sketched it so often."

They had emerged from the conservatory into a small square room, which was practically a continuation of the drawing-room, but which was decorated in pale blue and silver, and filled with a lot of knick-knacks that showed it was doubtless Mrs. Ross's boudoir. And out there, in the clear June sunshine, lay the broad greensward behind Prince's Gate, with the one splendid elm spreading his broad branches into the blue sky, and throwing a soft shadow on the corner of the gardens next to the house. How sweet and still it was! as still as the calm clear light in this girl's eyes. There was no passion there, and no trouble; only the light of a June day, and of blue skies, and a peaceful soul. She rested the tips of her fingers on a small rosewood table that stood by the window: surely, if a spirit ever lived in any table, the wood of this table must have thrilled to its core.

And had he given all this trouble to this perfect creature merely that he should look at a tree?—and was he to say some ordinary thing about an ordinary elm to tell her how grateful he was?

"It is like a dream to me," he said, honestly enough, "since

I came to London. You seem always to have sunlight and plenty of fine trees and hothouse flowers. But I suppose you have winter, like the rest of us?"

"Or we should very soon tire of all this, beautiful as it is," said she, and she looked rather wistfully out on the broad still gardens. "For my part, I should very soon tire of it. I should think there was more excitement in the wild storms and the dark nights of the north. There must be a strange fascination in the short winter days among the mountains, and the long winter nights by the side of the Atlantic."

He looked at her. That fierce fascination he knew something of: how had she guessed at it? And as for her talking as if she herself would gladly brave these storms—was it for a foam-bell to brave a storm? was it for a rose-leaf to meet the driving rains of Ben-an-Sloich?

"Shall we go back, now?" said she; and as she turned to lead the way he could not fail to remark how shapely her neck was, for her rich golden-brown hair was loosely gathered up behind.

But just at this moment Mrs. Ross made her appearance.

"Come," said she, "we shall have a chat all to ourselves; and you will tell me, Sir Keith, what you have seen since you came to London, and what has struck you most. And you must stay with us, Gertrude; perhaps Sir Keith will be so kind as to freeze your blood with another horrible story about the Highlanders—I am only a poor southerner and have to get up my legends from books—but this wicked girl, Sir Keith, delights as much in stories of bloodshed as a schoolboy does."

"You will not believe her," said Miss White, in that low-toned gravely sincere voice of hers, while a faint shell-like pink suffused her face. "It was only that we were talking of the Highlands, because we understood you were coming? and Mrs. Ross was trying to make out"—and here a spice of proud mischief came into the ordinarily calm eyes—"she was trying to make out that you must be a very terrible and dangerous person, who would probably murder us all if we were not civil to you."

"Well, you know, Sir Keith," said Mrs. Ross, apologetically, "you acknowledge yourself that you Macleods were a very

utter forgetfulness of himself. His eyes rested quite naturally on their eyes as he told his tale. But first of all, he spoke of the exceeding loyalty of the Highland folk to the head of their clan. Did they know that other story of how Maclean of Duart tried to capture the young heir of the house of Lochbuy, and how the boy was rescued and carried away by his nurse? And when, arrived at man's estate, he returned to revenge himself on those who had betrayed him, among them was the husband of the nurse. The young chief would have spared the life of this man, for the old woman's sake. "*Let the tail go with the hide,*" said she, and he was slain with the rest. And then the narrator went on to the story of the flogging. He told them how Maclean of Lochbuy was out after the deer one day; and his wife, with her child, had come out to see the shooting. They were driving the deer; and at a particular pass a man was stationed so that, should the deer come that way, he should turn them back. The deer came to this pass; the man failed to turn them; the chief was mad with rage. He gave orders that the man's back should be bared, and that he should be flogged before all the people.

"Very well," continued Macleod. "It was done. But it is not safe to do anything like that to a Highlander; at least it *was* not safe to do anything like that to a Highlander in those days; for, as I told you, Mrs. Ross, we are all like sheep now. Then they went after the deer again; but at one moment the man that had been flogged seized Maclean's child from the nurse, and ran with it across the mountain-side, till he reached a place overhanging the sea. And he held out the child over the sea; and it was of no use that Maclean begged on his knees for forgiveness. Even the passion of loyalty was lost now in the fierceness of revenge. This was what the man said—that unless Maclean had his back bared there and then before all the people, and flogged as he had been flogged, then the child should be dashed into the sea below. There was nothing to be done but that—no prayers, no offers, no appeals from the mother were of any use. And so it was that Maclean of Lochbuy was flogged there, before his own people; and his enemy above looking on. And then? When it was over, the man called out aloud, 'Revenged! Revenged!' and sprang into the air with the child

along with him; and neither of them was ever seen again after they had sunk into the sea. It is an old story."

An old story, doubtless, and often told; but its effect on this girl sitting beside him was strange. Her clasped hands trembled; her eyes were glazed and fascinated as if by some spell. Mrs. Ross, noticing this extreme tension of feeling, and fearing it, hastily rose.

"Come, Gertrude," she said, taking the girl by the hand, "we shall be frightened to death by these stories. Come and sing us a song—a French song, all about tears, and fountains, and bits of ribbon—or we shall be seeing the ghosts of murdered Highlanders coming in here in the daytime."

Macleod, not knowing what he had done, but conscious that something had occurred, followed them into the drawing-room, and retired into a sofa while Miss White sat down to the open piano. He hoped he had not offended her. He would not frighten her again with any ghastly stories from the wild northern seas.

And what was this French song that she was about to sing? The pale slender fingers were wandering over the keys; and there was a sound—faint and clear and musical—as of the rippling of distant summer waves. And sometimes the sounds came nearer; and now he fancied he recognised some old familiar strain; and he thought of his cousin Janet somehow; and of summer days down by the blue waters of the Atlantic. A French song? Surely if this air, that seemed to come nearer and nearer, was blown from any earthly land, it had come from the valleys of Lochiel and Ardgour and from the still shores of Arisaig and Moidart? Oh, yes; it was a very pretty French song that she had chosen to please Mrs. Ross with.

"A wee bird came to our ha' door,"

—this was what she sang; and though, to tell the truth, she had not much of a voice, it was exquisitely trained, and she sang with a tenderness and expression such as he, at least, had never heard before—

"He warbled sweet and clearly;
An' aye the o'ercome o' his sang
Was 'Wae's me for Prince Charlie!'

Oh! when I heard the bonnie, bonnie bird,
The tears cam' drappin' rarely;
I took my bonnet off my head,
For well I lo'ed Prince Charlie."

It could not have entered into his imagination to believe that such pathos could exist apart from the actual sorrow of the world. The instrument before her seemed to speak; and the low, joint cry was one of infinite grief and longing and love.

"Quoth I, 'My bird, my bonnie, bonnie bird,
Is that a sang ye borrow?
Are these some words ye've learnt by heart,
Or a lilt o' dool an' sorrow?'

'Oh, no, no, no!' the wee bird sang,
'I've flown sin' mornin' early;
But sic a day o' wind and rain—
Oh, wae's me for Prince Charlie!'"

Mrs. Ross glanced archly at him when she discovered what sort of French song it was that Miss White had chosen; but he paid no heed. His only thought was—"*If only the mother and Janet could hear this strange singing!*"

When she had ended, Mrs. Ross came over to him and said—

"That is a great compliment to you."

And he answered, simply—

"I have never heard any singing like that."

Then young Mr. Ogilvie—whose existence, by the way, he had entirely and most ungratefully forgotten—came up to the piano; and began to talk in a very pleasant and amusing fashion to Miss White. She was turning over the leaves of the book before her; and Macleod grew angry with this idle interference. Why should this lily-fingered jackanapes—whom a man could wind round a reel and throw out of window—disturb the rapt devotion of this beautiful Saint Cecilia?

She struck a firmer chord; the bystanders withdrew a bit; and of a sudden it seemed to him that all the spirit of all the clans was ringing in the proud fervour of this fragile girl's voice. Whence had she got this fierce Jacobite passion that thrilled him to the very finger-tips?

"I'll to Lochiel, and Appin, and kneel to them,
Down by Lord Murray and Roy of Kildarlie:
Brave Mackintosh, he shall fly to the field wi' them;
These are the lads I can trust wi' my Charlie!"

Could any man fail to answer? Could any man die otherwise than gladly if he died with such an appeal ringing in his ears? Macleod did not know there was scarcely any more volume in this girl's voice now than when she was singing the plaintive wail that preceded it: it seemed to him that there was the strength of the tread of armies in it; and a challenge that could rouse a nation.

"Down through the Lowlands, down wi' the Whigamore!
Loyal true Highlanders, down wi' them rarely!
Ronald and Donald, drive on wi' the broad claymore
Over the necks of the foes of Prince Charlie!
Follow thee! Follow thee! Wha wadna follow thee,
King o' the Highland hearts, bonnie Prince Charlie!"

She shut the book, with a light laugh, and left the piano. She came over to where Macleod sat. When he saw that she meant to speak to him, he rose, and stood before her.

"I must ask your pardon," said she, smiling, "for singing two Scotch songs; for I know the pronunciation is very difficult."

He answered with no idle compliment—

"If *Tearlach ban og*, as they used to call him, were alive now," said he—and indeed there was never any Stuart of them all, not even the Fair Young Charles himself, who looked more handsome than this same Macleod of Dare who now stood before her—"you would get him more men to follow him than any flag or standard he ever raised."

She cast her eyes down.

Mrs. Ross's guests began to leave.

"Gertrude," said she, "will you drive with me for half an hour?—the carriage is at the door. And I know the gentlemen want to have a cigar in the shade of Kensington Gardens: they might come back and have a cup of tea with us."

But Miss White had some engagement; she and her father left together; and the young men followed them almost directly—Mrs. Ross saying that she would be most pleased to see Sir Keith Macleod any Tuesday or Thursday afternoon he happened to be passing, as she was always at home on these days.

"I don't think we can do better than take her advice about the cigar," said young Ogilvie, as they crossed to Kensington Gardens. "What do you think of her?"

"Of Mrs. Ross?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I think she is a very pleasant woman."

"Yes, but——" said Mr. Ogilvie, "how did she strike you? Do you think she is as fascinating as some men think her?"

"I don't know what men think about her," said Macleod. "It never occurred to me to ask whether a married woman was fascinating or not. I thought she was a friendly woman—talkative, amusing, clever enough."

They lit their cigars in the cool shadow of the great elms: who does not know how beautiful Kensington Gardens are in June? And yet Macleod did not seem disposed to be garrulous about these new experiences of his; he was absorbed, and mostly silent.

"That is an extraordinary fancy she has taken for Gertrude White," Mr. Ogilvie remarked.

"Why extraordinary?" the other asked, with sudden interest.

"Oh, well, it is unusual, you know; but she is a nice girl enough, and Mrs. Ross is fond of odd folks. You didn't speak to old White?—his head is a sort of British Museum of antiquities; but he is of some use to these people—he is such a swell about old armour, and china, and such things. They say he wants to be sent out to dig for Dido's funeral pyre at Carthage, and that he is only waiting to get the trinkets made at Birmingham."

They walked on a bit in silence.

"I think you made a good impression on Mrs. Ross," said Mr. Ogilvie, coolly. "You'll find her an uncommonly useful woman, if she takes a fancy to you; for she knows everybody and goes everywhere, though her own house is too small to let her entertain properly. By the way, Macleod, I don't think you could have hit on a worse fellow than I to take you about; for I am so little in London that I have become a rank outsider. But I'll tell you what I'll do for you if you will go with me to-night to Lord Beauregard's who is an old friend of mine. I will

ask him to introduce you to some people—and his wife gives very good dances—and if any Royal or Imperial swell comes to town you'll be sure to run against him there. I forget who it is they are receiving there to-night; but anyhow you'll meet two or three of the fat duchesses whom Dizzy adores; and I shouldn't wonder if that Irish girl were there—the new beauty: Lady Beauregard is very clever in picking people up."

"Will Miss White be there?" Macleod asked, apparently deeply engaged in probing the end of his cigar.

His companion looked up in surprise: then a new fancy seemed to occur to him; and he smiled very slightly.

"Well, no," said he slowly, "I don't think she will. In fact, I am almost sure she will be at the Piccadilly Theatre. If you like, we will give up Lady Beauregard, and after dinner go to the Piccadilly Theatre instead. How will that do?"

"I think that will do very well," said Macleod.

CHAPTER IV.

WONDER-LAND.

A COOL evening in June—the club-windows open—a clear twilight shining over Pall Mall—and a *tête-à-tête* dinner at a small clean, bright table: these are not the conditions in which a young man should show impatience. And yet the cunning dishes which Mr. Ogilvie, who had a certain pride in his club, though it was only one of the junior institutions, had placed before his friend, met with but scant curiosity: Macleod would rather have handed questions of cookery over to his cousin Janet. Nor did he pay much heed to his companion's sage advice as to the sort of club he should have himself proposed at, with a view to getting elected in a dozen or fifteen years; a young man is apt to let his life at forty shift for itself.

"You seem very anxious to see Miss White again," said Mr. Ogilvie, with a slight smile.

"I wish to make all the friends I can while I am in London," said Macleod. "What shall I do in this howling wilderness when you go back to Aldershot?"

"I don't think Miss Gertrude White will be of much use to you. Colonel Ross may be. Or Lord Beauregard. But you cannot expect young ladies to take you about."

"No?" said Macleod gravely, "that is a great pity."

Mr. Ogilvie, who, with all his knowledge of the world, and of wines, and cookery, and women, and what not, had sometimes an uneasy consciousness that his companion was covertly laughing at him, here proposed that they should have a cigar before walking up to the Piccadilly Theatre; but as it was now ten minutes to eight, Macleod resolutely refused. He begged to be considered a country person, anxious to see the piece from the beginning. And so they put on their light top-coats over their evening dress and walked up to the theatre.

A distant sound of music; an odour of escaped gas; a perilous descent of a corkscrew staircase; a drawing aside of heavy curtains; and then a blaze of yellow light shining within this circular building, on its red satin and gilt plaster, and on the spacious picture of a blue Italian lake, with peacocks on the wide stone terraces. The noise at first was bewildering. The leader of the orchestra was sawing away at his violin as savagely as if he were calling on his company to rush up and seize a battery of guns. What was the melody that was being banged about by the trombones, and blared aloud by the shrill cornets, and sawed across by the infuriated violins? "*When the heart of a man is oppressed with care*"? The cure was never insisted on with such an angry vehemence.

Recovering from the first shock of the fierce noise, Macleod began to look around this strange place, with its magical colours and its profusion of gilding; but nowhere in the half-empty stalls or behind the lace curtains of the boxes, could he make out the visitor of whom he was in search. Perhaps she was not coming, then? Had he sacrificed the evening all for nothing? As regarded the theatre, or the piece to be played, he had not the

slightest interest in either. The building was very pretty, no doubt; but it was only, in effect, a superior sort of booth; and as for the trivial amusement of watching a number of people strut across a stage and declaim—or perhaps make fools of themselves to raise a laugh—that was not at all to his liking. It would have been different had he been able to talk to the girl who had shown such a strange interest in the gloomy stories of the northern seas; perhaps, though he would scarcely have admitted this to himself, it might have been different if only he had been allowed to see her at some distance. But her being absent altogether? The more the seats in the stalls were filled—reducing the chances of her coming—the more empty the theatre seemed to become.

"At least we can go along to that house you mentioned," said he to his companion.

"Oh, don't be disappointed yet," said Ogilvie; "I know she will be here."

"With Mrs. Ross?"

"Mrs. Ross comes very often to this theatre. It is the correct thing to do. It is high art. All the people are raving about the chief actress; artists painting her portrait; poets writing sonnets about her different characters; no end of a fuss. And Mrs. Ross is very proud that so distinguished a person is her particular friend"—

"Do you mean the actress?"

"Yes;—and makes her the big feature of her parties at present; and society is rather inclined to make a pet of her too—patronising high art, don't you know? It's wonderful what you can do in that way. If a duke wants a clown to make fellows laugh after a Derby dinner, he gets him to his house, and makes him dance; and if the papers find it out it is only 'raising the moral status of the pantomime.' Of course it is different with Mrs. Ross's friend—she is all right socially."

The garrulous boy was stopped by the sudden cessation of the music; and then the Italian lake and the peacocks disappeared into unknown regions above; and behold! in their place a spacious hall was revealed—not the bare and simple hall at Castle Dare with which Macleod was familiar—but a grand apartment, filled with old armour, and pictures, and cabinets,

and showing glimpses of a balcony and fair gardens beyond. There were two figures in this hall; and they spoke—in the high and curious falsetto of the stage. Macleod paid no more heed to them than if they had been marionettes. For one thing, he could not follow their speech very well; but in any case, what interest could he have in listening to this old lawyer explaining to the stout lady that the family affairs were grievously involved? He was still intently watching the new comers who straggled in, singly or in pairs, to the stalls: when a slight motion of the white curtains showed that some one was entering one of the boxes, the corner of the box was regarded with as earnest a gaze as ever followed the movements of a herd of red-deer in the misty chasms of Ben-an-Sloich. What concern had he in the troubles of this overdressed and stout lady, who was bewailing her misfortunes and wringing her bejewelled hands?

Suddenly his heart seemed to stand still altogether. It was a light, glad laugh—the sound of a voice he knew,—that seemed to have pierced him as with a rifle-ball; and at the same moment, from the green shimmer of foliage in the balcony, there stepped into the glare of the hall a young girl with life and laughter and a merry carelessness in her face and eyes. She threw her arm round her mother's neck and kissed her. She bowed to the legal person. She flung her garden-hat on to a couch; and got up on a chair to get fresh seed put in for her canary. It was all done so simply, and naturally, and gracefully, that in an instant a fire of life and reality sprang into the whole of this sham thing. The older woman was no longer a marionette, but the anguish stricken mother of this gay and heedless girl. And when the daughter jumped down from the chair again—her canary on her finger—and when she came forward to pet and caress and remonstrate with her mother—and when the glare of the lights flashed on the merry eyes, and on the white teeth and laughing lips—there was no longer any doubt possible. Macleod's face was quite pale. He took the programme from Ogilvie's hand, and for a minute or two stared mechanically at the name of Miss Gertrude White printed on the pink tinted paper. He gave it him back without a word. Ogilvie only smiled; he was proud of the surprise he had planned.

And now the fancies and recollections that came rushing into Macleod's head were of a sufficiently chaotic and bewildering character. He tried to separate that grave and gentle and sensitive girl he had met at Prince's Gate from this gay madcap; and he could not at all succeed. His heart laughed with the laughter of this wild creature; he enjoyed the discomfiture and despair of the old lawyer, as she stood before him, twirling her garden-hat by a solitary ribbon; and when the small white fingers raised the canary to be kissed by the pouting lips, the action was more graceful than anything he had ever seen in the world. But where was the silent and serious girl who had listened with such rapt attention to his tales of passion and revenge—who seemed to have some mysterious longing for those gloomy shores he came from—who had sung with such exquisite pathos "A wee bird cam' to our ha' door"? Her cheek had turned white when she heard of the fate of the son of Maclean: surely that sensitive and vivid imagination could not belong to this audacious girl, with her laughing, and teasings, and demure coquetry?

Society had not been talking about the art of Mrs. Ross's *protégée* for nothing; and that art soon made short work of Keith Macleod's doubts. The fair stranger he had met at Prince's Gate vanished into mist. Here was the real woman; and all the trumpery business of the theatre, that he would otherwise have regarded with indifference or contempt, became a real and living thing; insomuch that he followed the fortunes of this spoiled child with a breathless interest and a beating heart. The spell was on him. Oh, why should she be so proud to this poor lover, who stood so meekly before her? "Coquette! coquette!" (Macleod could have cried to her) "the days are not always full of sunshine; life is not all youth and beauty and high spirits; you may come to repent of your pride and your cruelty." He had no jealousy against the poor youth who took his leave; he pitied him—but it was for her sake; he seemed to know that evil days were coming, when she would long for the solace of an honest man's love. And when the trouble came—as speedily it did—and when she stood bravely up at first to meet her fate, and when she broke down for a time, and buried her face in her hands, and cried with bitter sobs, the tears were running down his face,

Could the merciful Heavens see such grief, and let the wicked triumph! And why was there no man to succour her? Surely some times arise in which the old law is the good law; and a man will trust to his own right arm to put things straight in the world? To look at her—could any man refuse? And now she rises and goes away; and all the glad summer-time and the sunshine have gone; and the cold wind shivers through the trees, and it breathes only of farewell. Farewell, O miserable one! the way is dark before you; and you are alone. Alone, and no man near to help.

Macleod was awakened from his trance. The act-drop was let down; there was a stir throughout the theatre; young Ogilvie turned to him.

"Don't you see who has come into that corner box up there?"

If he had been told that Miss White, come up from Prince's Gate, in her plain black dress and blue beads, had just arrived and was seated there, he would scarcely have been surprised. As it was, he looked up, and saw Colonel Ross taking his seat, while the figure of a lady was partially visible behind the lace curtain.

"I wonder how often Mrs. Ross has seen this piece!" Ogilvie said. "And I think Colonel Ross is as profound a believer in Miss White as his wife is. Will you go up and see them now?"

"No," Macleod said absently.

"I shall tell them," said the facetious boy, as he rose, and got hold of his crush-hat, "that you are meditating a leap on to the stage, to rescue the distressed damsel."

And then his conscience smote him.

"Mind you," said he, "I think it is awfully good myself. I can't pump up any enthusiasm for most things that people rave about; but I do think this girl is uncommonly clever. And then she always dresses like a lady."

With this high commendation Lieutenant Ogilvie left, and made his way up-stairs to Mrs. Ross's box. Apparently he was well received there; for he did not make his appearance again at the beginning of the next act, nor, indeed, until it was nearly over.

The dream-world opens again; and now it is a beautiful garden, close by the ruins of an old abbey; and fine ladies are walking

about there. But what does he care for these marionettes uttering meaningless phrases? They have no more interest for him than the sham ivy on the sham ruins, so long as that one bright, speaking, pathetic face is absent; and the story they are carrying forward is for him no story at all, for he takes no heed of its details in his anxious watching for her appearance. The sides of this garden are mysteriously divided: by which avenue will she approach? Suddenly he hears the low voice—she comes nearer—now let the world laugh again! But alas! when she does appear, it is in the company of her lover; and it is only to bid him good-bye. Why does the coward hind take her at her word? A stick, a stone, a wave of the cold sea, would be more responsive to that deep and tremulous voice, which has now no longer any of the arts of a wilful coquetry about it, but is altogether as self-revealing as the generous abandonment of her eyes. The poor cipher!—he is not the man to woo and win and carry off this noble woman, the unutterable soul-surrender of whose look has the courage of despair in it. He bids her farewell. The tailor's dummy retires. And she?—in her agony, is there no one to comfort her? They have demanded this sacrifice in the name of duty; and she has consented: ought not that to be enough to comfort her?

Then other people appear, from other parts of the garden; and there is a Babel of tongues. He hears nothing; but he follows that sad face, until he could imagine that he listens to the throbbing of her aching heart.

And then, as the phantasms of the stage come and go, and fortune plays many pranks with these puppets, the piece draws near to an end. And now, as it appears, everything is reversed; and it is the poor lover who is in grievous trouble, while she is restored to the proud position of her coquetries and wilful graces again, with all her friends smiling around her, and life lying fair before her. She meets him by accident. Suffering gives him a certain sort of dignity; but how is one to retain patience with the blindness of this insufferable ass? Don't you see, man, don't you see that she is waiting to throw herself into your arms? and you, you poor ninny, are giving yourself airs, and assuming the grand heroic! And then the shy coquetry comes in again. The

pathetic eyes are full of a grave compassion, if he must really never see her more. The cat plays with the poor mouse, and pretends that really the tender thing is gone away at last. He will take this half of a broken sixpence back: it was given in happier times. If ever he should marry, he will know that one far away prays for his happiness. And if—if these unwomanly tears . . . and suddenly the crass idiot discovers that she is laughing at him; and that she has secured him and bound him as completely as a fly fifty times wound round by a spider. The crash of applause that accompanied the lowering of the curtain stunned Macleod, who had not quite come back from dream-land. And then, amid a confused roar, the curtain was drawn a bit back, and she was led—timidly smiling, so that her eyes seemed to take in all the theatre at once—across the stage by that same poor fool of a lover; and she had two or three bouquets thrown her, notably one from Mrs. Ross's box. Then she disappeared; and the lights were lowered; and there was a dull shuffling of people getting their cloaks and hats and going away.

"Mrs. Ross wants to see you for a minute," Ogilvie said.

"Yes," Macleod answered absently.

"And we have time yet, if you like, to get into a hansom, and drive along to Lady Beauregard's."

CHAPTER V.

IN PARK LANE.

THEY found Mrs. Ross and her husband waiting in the corridor above.

"Well, how did you like it?" she said.

He could not answer off-hand. He was afraid he might say too much.

"It is like her singing," he stammered at length. "I am not

used to these things. I have never seen anything like that before."

"We shall soon have her in a better piece," Mrs. Ross said. "It is being written for her. That is very pretty; but slight. She is capable of greater things."

"She is capable of anything," said Macleod simply, "if she can make you believe that such nonsense is real. I looked at the others. What did they say or do, better than mere pictures in a book? But she——it is like magic."

"And did Mr. Ogilvie give you my message?" said Mrs. Ross. "My husband and I are going down to see a yacht race on the Thames to-morrow—we did not think of it till this evening any more than we expected to find you here. We came along to try to get Miss White to go with us. Will you join our little party?"

"Oh, yes, certainly—thank you very much," Macleod said eagerly.

"Then you'd better meet us at Charing Cross, at ten sharp," Colonel Ross said; "so don't let Ogilvie keep you up too late with brandy and soda. A special will take us down."

"Brandy and soda!" Mr. Ogilvie exclaimed. "I am going to take him along for a few minutes to Lady Beauregard's—surely that is proper enough; and I have to get down by the 'cold-meat' train to Aldershot, so there won't be much brandy and soda for me. Shall we go now, Mrs. Ross?"

"I am waiting for an answer," Mrs. Ross said, looking along the corridor.

Was it possible, then, that she herself should bring the answer to this message that had been sent her—stepping out of the dream-world in which she had disappeared with her lover? And how would she look as she came along this narrow passage? Like the arch coquette of this land of gaslight and glowing colours? or like the pale, serious, proud girl who was fond of sketching the elm at Prince's Gate? A strange nervousness possessed him as he thought she might suddenly appear. He did not listen to the talk between Colonel Ross and Mr. Ogilvie. He did not notice that this small party was obviously regarded as being in the way by the attendants who were putting out the

lights and shutting the doors of the boxes. Then a man came along.

"Miss White's compliments, ma'am; and she will be very pleased to meet you at Charing Cross at ten to-morrow."

"And Miss White is a very brave young lady to attempt anything of the kind," observed Mr. Ogilvie confidentially, as they all went down the stairs. "For if the yachts should get becalmed off the Nore, or off the Mouse, I wonder how Miss White will get back to London in time?"

"Oh, we shall take care of that," said Colonel Ross. "Unless there is a good steady breeze we shan't go at all; we shall spend a happy day at Rosherville; or have a look at the pictures at Greenwich. We shan't get Miss White into trouble. Good-bye, Ogilvie. Good-bye, Sir Keith. Remember — ten o'clock, Charing Cross."

They stepped into their carriage and drove off.

"Now," said Macleod's companion, "are you tired?"

"Tired! I have done nothing all day."

"Shall we get into a hansom, and drive along to Lady Beauregard's?"

"Certainly, if you like I suppose they won't throw you over again?"

"Oh, no," said Mr. Ogilvie, as he once more adventured his person in a cab. "And I can tell you it is much better—if you look at the thing philosophically, as poor wretches like you and me must—to drive to a crush in a hansom than in your own carriage. You don't worry about your horses being kept out in the rain; you can come away at any moment; there is no fussing with servants, and rows because your man has got out of the rank——HOLD UP!"

Whether it was the yell or not, the horse recovered from the slight stumble; and no harm befell the two daring travellers.

"These vehicles give one some excitement," Macleod said—or rather roared, for Piccadilly was full of carriages. "A squall in Loch Scridain is nothing to them."

"You'll get used to them in time," was the complacent answer.

They dismissed the hansom at the corner of Piccadilly, and walked up Park Lane, so as to avoid waiting in the rank of

carriages. Macleod accompanied his companion meekly. All this scene around him—the flashing lights of the broughams—the brilliant windows—the stepping across the pavement of a strangely-dressed dignitary from some foreign land—seemed but some other part of that dream from which he had not quite shaken himself free. His head was still full of the sorrows and coquetries of that wild-spirited heroine. Whither had she gone by this time—away into some strange valley of that unknown world?

He was better able than Mr. Ogilvie to push his way through the crowd of footmen who stood in two lines across the pavement in front of Beauregard House, watching for the first appearance of their master or mistress; but he resignedly followed and found himself in the avenue leading clear up to the steps. They were not the only arrivals, late as the hour was. Two young girls, sisters, clad in cream-white silk with a gold fringe across their shoulders and sleeves, preceded them; and he was greatly pleased by the manner in which these young ladies, on meeting in the great hall an elderly lady who was presumably a person of some distinction, dropped a pretty little old-fashioned curtsy as they shook hands with her. He admired much less the formal obeisance which he noticed a second after. A Royal personage was leaving; and as this lady, who was dressed in mourning, and was leaning on the arm of a gentleman whose coat was blazing with diamond stars, and whose breast was barred across with a broad blue ribbon, came along the spacious landing at the foot of the wide staircase, she graciously extended her hand and said a few words to such of the ladies standing by as she knew. That deep bending of the knee he considered to be less pretty than the little curtsy performed by the young ladies in cream-white silk. He intended to mention this matter to his cousin Janet.

Then, as soon as the Princess had left, the lane through which she had passed closed up again, and the crowd became a confused mass of murmuring groups. Still meekly following, Macleod plunged into this throng; and presently found himself being introduced to Lady Beauregard, an amiable little woman who had been a great beauty in her time and was pleasant enough to look at now. He passed on,

"Who is the man with the blue ribbon and the diamond stars?" he asked of Mr. Ogilvie.

"That is Monsieur le Marquis himself—that is your host," the young gentleman replied—only Macleod could not tell why he was obviously trying to repress some covert merriment.

"Didn't you hear?" Mr. Ogilvie said at length. "Don't you know what he called you? That man will be the death of me—for he's always at it. He announced you as Sir Thief Macleod—I will swear he did."

"I should not have thought he had so much historical knowledge," Macleod answered gravely. "He must have been reading up about the clans."

At this moment, Lady Beauregard, who had been receiving some other late visitors, came up and said she wished to introduce him to—he could not make out the name. He followed her. He was introduced to a stout elderly lady, who still had beautifully fine features, and a simple and calm air which rather impressed him. It is true that at first a thrill of compassion went through him; for he thought that some accident had befallen the poor lady's costume, and that it had fallen down a bit unknown to herself; but he soon perceived that most of the other women were dressed similarly, some of the younger ones, indeed, having the back of their dress open practically to the waist. He wondered what his mother and Janet would say to this style.

"Don't you think the Princess is looking pale?" he was asked.

"I thought she looked very pretty—I never saw her before," said he.

What next? That calm air was a trifle cold and distant. He did not know who the woman was; or where she lived; or whether her husband had any shooting, or a yacht, or a pack of hounds. What was he to say? He returned to the Princess.

"I only saw her as she was leaving," said he. "We came late. We were at the Piccadilly Theatre."

"Oh, you saw Miss Gertrude White?" said this stout lady; and he was glad to see her eyes light up with some interest. "She is very clever, is she not?—and so pretty and engaging. I wish I knew some one who knew her."

"I know some friends of hers," Macleod said, rather timidly.

"Oh, do you, really? Do you think she would give me a morning performance for my Fund?"

This lady seemed to take it so much for granted that every one must have heard of her Fund that he dared not confess his ignorance. But it was surely some charitable thing; and how could he doubt that Miss White would immediately respond to such an appeal?

"I should think that she would," said he, with a little hesitation—but at this moment some other claimant came forward, and he turned away to seek young Ogilvie once more.

"Ogilvie," said he, "who is that lady in the green satin?"

"The Duchess of Wexford."

"Has she a Fund?"

"A what?"

"A Fund—a charitable Fund of some sort."

"Oh, let me see. I think she is getting up money for a new training-ship—turning the young ragamuffins about the streets into sailors, don't you know?"

"Do you think Miss White would give a morning performance for that Fund?"

"Miss White! Miss White! Miss White!" said Lieutenant Ogilvie. "I think Miss White has got into your head."

"But that Lady asked me."

"Well, I should say it was exactly the thing that Miss White would like to do—get mixed up with a whole string of Duchesses and Marchionesses—a capital advertisement—and it would be all the more distinguished if it was an amateur performance, and Miss Gertrude White the only professional admitted into the charmed circle."

"You are a very shrewd boy, Ogilvie," Macleod observed. "I don't know how you ever got so much wisdom into so small a head."

And indeed, as Lieutenant Ogilvie was returning to Aldershot by what he was pleased to call the cold-meat train, he continued to play the part of Mentor for a time with great assiduity, until Macleod was fairly confused with the number of persons to whom he was introduced and the remarks his friend made about

them. What struck him most, perhaps, was the recurrence of old Highland or Scotch family names, borne by persons who were thoroughly English in their speech and ways. Fancy a Gordon who said "lock" for "loch"; a Mackenzie who had never seen the Lewis; a Mac Alpine who had never heard the proverb, "The hills, the Mac Alpines, and the devil came into the world at the same time."

It was a pretty scene; and he was young, and eager, and curious; and he enjoyed it. After standing about for half-an-hour or so, he got into a corner from which, in quiet, he could better see the brilliant picture as a whole—the bright, harmonious dresses, the glimpses of beautiful eyes and blooming complexions, the masses of foxgloves which Lady Beauregard had as the only floral decoration of the evening, the pale canary-coloured panels and silver fluted columns of the walls, and over all the various candelabra, each bearing a cluster of sparkling and golden stars. But there was something wanting. Was it the noble and silver-haired lady of Castle Dare whom he looked for in vain in that brilliant crowd that moved and murmured before him? Or was it the friendly and familiar face of his cousin Janet, whose eyes, he knew, would be filled with a constant wonder if she saw such diamonds and silks and satins? Or was it that *ignis fatuus*—that treacherous and mocking fire—that might at any time glimmer in some suddenly presented face with a new surprise? Had she deceived him altogether down at Prince's Gate? Was her real nature that of the wayward, bright, mischievous, spoiled child whose very tenderness only prepared her unsuspecting victim for a merciless thrust? And yet the sound of her sobbing was still in his ears. A true woman's heart beat beneath that idle raillery: challenged boldly, would it not answer loyally and without fear?

Psychological puzzles were new to this son of the mountains; and it is no wonder that long after he had bidden good-bye to his friend Ogilvie, and as he sate thinking alone in his own room, with Oscar lying across the rug at his feet, his mind refused to be quieted. One picture after another presented itself to his imagination—the proud-souled enthusiast, longing for the wild [illegible]r nights and the dark Atlantic seas—the pensive maiden,

shuddering to hear the fierce story of Maclean of Lochbuy—the spoiled child, teasing her mamma, and petting her canary—the wronged and weeping woman, her frame shaken with sobs, her hands clasped in despair—the artful and demure coquette, mocking her lover with her sentimental farewells. Which of them all was she? Which should he see in the morning? Or would she appear as some still more elusive vision, retreating before him as he advanced?

Had he asked himself, he would have said that these speculations were but the fruit of a natural curiosity. Why should he not be interested in finding out the real nature of this girl, whose acquaintance he had just made? It has been observed, however, that young gentlemen do not always betray this frantic devotion to psychological inquiry when the subject of it, instead of being a fascinating maiden of twenty, is a homely-featured lady of fifty.

Time passed; another cigar was lit; the blue light outside was becoming silvery; and yet the problem remained unsolved. A fire of impatience and restlessness was burning in his heart; a din as of brazen instruments—what was the air the furious orchestra played?—was in his ears; sleep or rest was out of the question.

"Oscar!" he called. "Oscar, my lad, let us go out."

When he stealthily went down-stairs, and opened the door, and passed into the street, behold! the new day was shining abroad—and how cold, and still, and silent it was after the hot glare and the whirl of that bewildering night! No living thing was visible. A fresh, sweet air stirred the leaves of the trees and bushes in St. James's Square. There was a pale lemon-yellow glow in the sky, and the long empty thoroughfare of Pall Mall seemed coldly white.

Was this a somnambulist, then, who wandered idly along through the silent streets, apparently seeing nothing of the closed doors and the shuttered windows on either hand? A policeman, standing at the corner of Waterloo Place, stared at the apparition—at the twin apparition; for this tall young gentleman with the light top-coat thrown over his evening dress was accompanied by a beautiful collie that kept close to his heels. There was a

solitary four-wheeled cab at the foot of the Haymarket; but the man had got inside and was doubtless asleep. The Embankment?—with the young trees stirring in the still morning air; and the broad bosom of the river catching the gathering glow of the skies. He leaned on the grey stone parapet, and looked out on the placid waters of the stream.

Placid indeed they were as they went flowing quietly by; and the young day promised to be bright enough; and why should there be aught but peace and goodwill upon earth towards all men and women? Surely there was no call for any unrest, or fear, or foreboding? The still and shining morning was but emblematic of his life—if only he knew, and were content. And indeed he looked contented enough, as he wandered on, breathing the cool freshness of the air, and with a warmer light from the east now touching from time to time his sun-tanned face. He went up to Covent Garden—for mere curiosity's sake. He walked along Piccadilly, and thought the elms in the Green Park looked more beautiful than ever. When he returned to his rooms, he was of opinion that it was scarcely worth while to go to bed; and so he changed his clothes, and called for breakfast as soon as some one was up. In a short time—after his newspaper had been read—he would have to go down to Charing Cross.

What of this morning walk? Perhaps it was unimportant enough. Only, in after times, he once or twice thought of it; and very clearly, indeed, he could see himself standing there in the early light, looking out on the shining waters of the river. They say that when you see yourself too vividly—when you imagine that you yourself are standing before yourself—that is one of the signs of madness.

THE RIVER THAMES.

CHAPTER VI.

A SUMMER-DAY ON THE THAMES.

It occurred to him as he walked down to the station—perhaps he went early on the chance of finding her there alone—that he ought seriously to study the features of this girl's face; for was there not a great deal of character to be learned, or guessed at, that way? He had but the vaguest notion of what she was really like. He knew that her teeth were pearly white when she smiled, and that the rippling golden-brown hair lay rather low on a calm and thoughtful forehead; but he had a less distinct impression that her nose was perhaps the least thing *retroussée;* and as to her eyes? They might be blue, grey, or green: but one thing he was sure of was that they could speak more than was ever uttered by any speech. He knew besides that she had an exquisite figure: perhaps it was the fact that her shoulders were a trifle squarer than is common with women that made her look somewhat taller than she really was.

He would confirm or correct these vague impressions. And as the chances were that they would spend a whole long day together, he would have abundant opportunity of getting to know something about the character and disposition of this new acquaintance, so that she should no longer be to him a puzzling and distracting will-o'-the-wisp. What had he come to London for but to improve his knowledge of men and of women, and to see what was going on in the larger world? And so this earnest student walked down to the station.

There were a good many people about, mostly in groups chatting with each other; but he recognised no one. Perhaps he was looking out for Colonel and Mrs. Ross; perhaps for a slender figure in black, with blue beads; at all events he was gazing somewhat vacantly around, when some one turned close by him. Then his heart stood still for a second. The sudden light that sprang to her face when she recognised him blinded him. Was it to be always so? Was she always to come upon him in a

flash, as it were? What chance had the poor student of fulfilling his patient task when, on his approach, he was sure to be met by this surprise of the parted lips, and sudden smile, and bright look? He was far too bewildered to examine the outline of her nose, or the curve of the exquisitely short upper lip.

But the plain truth was that there was no extravagant joy at all in Miss White's face; but a very slight and perhaps pleased surprise; and she was not in the least embarrassed.

"Are you looking for Mrs. Ross," said she, "like myself?"

"Yes," said he; and then he found himself exceedingly anxious to say a great deal to her, without knowing where to begin. She had surprised him too much—as usual. She was so different from what he had been dreaming about. Here was no one of the imaginary creatures that had risen before his mind during the stillness of the night. Even the pale dreamer in black and blue beads was gone. He found before him (as far as he could make out) a quiet, bright-faced, self-possessed girl, clad in a light and cool costume of white—with bits of black velvet about it—and her white gloves and sunshade, and the white silver chain round her slender waist, were important features in the picture she presented. How could this eager student of character get rid of these distressing trivialities? All night long he had been dreaming of beautiful sentiments and conflicting emotions: now his first thought was that he had never seen any costume so delightfully cool and clear and summer-like. To look at her was to think of a mountain-spring, icy-cold even in the sunshine.

"I always come early," said she, in the most matter-of-fact way. "I cannot bear hurry in catching a train."

Of course not. How could any one associate rattling cabs, and excited porters, and frantic mobs, with this serene creature, who seemed to have been wafted to Charing Cross on a cloud? And if he had had his will, there would have been no special train to disturb her repose. She would have embarked in a noble barge, and lain upon couches of swan's down, and ample awnings of silk would have sheltered her from the sun, while the beautiful craft floated away down the river, its crimson hangings here and there just touching the rippling waters.

"Ought we to take tickets?"

That was what she actually said; but what those eloquent, innocent eyes seemed to say was, "*Can you read what we have to tell you? Don't you know what a simple and confiding soul appeals to you?—clear as the daylight in its truth. Cannot you look through us and see the trusting, tender soul within?*"

"Perhaps we had better wait for Colonel Ross," said he; and there was a little pronoun in this sentence that he would like to have repeated. It was a friendly word. It established a sort of secret companionship. It is the proud privilege of a man to know all about railway-tickets; but he rather preferred this association with her helpless innocence and ignorance.

"I had no idea you were coming to-day. I rather like those surprise parties. Mrs. Ross never thought of going till last evening, she says. Oh! by the way, I saw you in the theatre last evening."

He almost started. He had quite forgotten that this self-possessed, clear-eyed, pale girl was the madcap coquette whose caprices and griefs had alternately fascinated and moved him on the previous evening.

"Oh, indeed," he stammered. "It was a great pleasure to me—and a surprise. Lieutenant Ogilvie played a trick on me. He did not tell me before we went that—that you were to appear"——

She looked amused.

"You did not know, then, when we met at Mrs. Ross's, that I was engaged at the Piccadilly Theatre?"

"Not in the least," he said, earnestly; as if he wished her distinctly to understand that he could not have imagined such a thing to be possible.

"You should have let me send you a box. We have another piece in rehearsal. Perhaps you will come to see that?"

Now if these few sentences, uttered by those two young people in the noisy railway station, be taken by themselves and regarded, they will be found to consist of the dullest commonplace. No two strangers in all that crowd could have addressed each other in a more indifferent fashion. But the trivial nothings which the mouth utters may become possessed of awful import when accompanied by the language of the eyes; and the poor common-

place sentences may be taken up and translated, so that they shall stand written across the memory, in letters of flashing sunlight and the colours of June. "*Ought we to take tickets?*" There was not much poetry in the phrase; but she lifted her eyes just then.

And now Colonel Ross and his wife appeared, accompanied by the only other friend they could get at such short notice to join this scratch party—a demure little old lady who had a very large house on Campden Hill which everybody coveted. They were just in time to get comfortably seated in the spacious saloon-carriage that had been reserved for them. The train slowly glided out of the station; and then began to rattle away from the mist of London. Glimpses of a keener blue began to appear. The gardens were green with the foliage of the early summer; martens swept across the still pools, a spot of white when they got into the shadow. And Miss White would have as many windows open as possible, so that the sweet June air swept right through the long carriage.

And was she not a very child in her enjoyment of this sudden escape into the country? The rapid motion—the silvery light—the sweet air—the glimpses of orchards, and farm-houses, and mill-streams—all were a delight to her; and although she talked in a delicate, half-reserved, shy way with that low voice of hers, still there was plenty of vivacity and gladness in her eyes. They drove from Gravesend station to the river-side. They passed through the crowd waiting to see the yachts start. They got on board the steamer; and at the very instant that Macleod stepped from the gangway on to the deck the military band on board—by some strange coincidence—struck up "A Highland lad my love was born." Mrs. Ross laughed; and wondered whether the bandmaster had recognised her husband.

And now they turned to the river; and there were the narrow and shapely cutters, with their tall spars, and their ensigns fluttering in the sunlight. They lay in two tiers across the river, four in each tier, the first row consisting of small forty-tonners, the more stately craft behind. A brisk north-easterly wind was blowing, causing the bosom of the river to flash in ripples of light. Boats of every size and shape moved up and

down and across the stream. The sudden firing of a gun caused some movement among the red-capped mariners of the four yachts in front.

"They are standing by the halyards," said Colonel Ross, to his women-folk. "Now watch for the next signal."

Another gun was fired; and all of a sudden there was a rattling of blocks and chains; and the four mainsails slowly rose; and the flapping jibs were run up. The bows drifted round: which would get way on her first? But now there was a wild uproar of voices. The boom-end of one of the yachts had caught one of the stays of her companion; and both were brought up head to wind. Cutter No. III. took advantage of this mishap to sail through the lee of both her enemies, and got clear away, with the sunlight playing full on her bellying canvas. But there was no time to watch the further adventures of the forty-tonners. Here and closer at hand were the larger craft; and high up in the rigging were the mites of men, ready to drop into the air, clinging on to the halyards. The gun is fired; down they come, swinging in the air; and the moment they have reached the deck they are off and up the ratlines again, again to drop into the air until the throat is high hoisted, the peak swinging this way and that, and the gray folds of the mainsail lazily flapping in the wind. The steamer begins to roar. The yachts fall away from their moorings; and one by one the sails fill out to the fresh breeze. And now all is silence and an easy gliding motion; for the eight competitors have all started away, and the steamer is smoothly following them.

"How beautiful they are—like splendid swans!" Miss White said: she had a glass in her hand, but did not use it, for as yet the stately fleet was near enough.

"A swan has a body," said Macleod. "Those things seem to me to be nothing but wings. It is all canvas, and no hull."

And indeed when the large topsails and big jibs came to be set, it certainly appeared as if there was nothing below to steady this vast extent of canvas.

"If they were up in our part of the world," said he, "I am afraid a puff of wind from the Gribun cliffs might send the whole fleet to the bottom."

"They know better than to try, at least with their present rig," Colonel Ross said. "Those yachts are admirably suited for the Thames; and Thames yachting is a very nice thing. It is very close to London. You can take a day's fresh air when you like, without going all the way to Cowes. You can get back to town in time to dine."

"I hope so," said Miss White, with emphasis.

"Oh, you need not be afraid," her host said, laughing. "We only go round the Nore to-day, and with this steady breeze we ought to be back early in the afternoon. My dear Miss White, we shan't allow you to disappoint the British public."

"So I may abandon myself to complete idleness without concern?"

"Most certainly."

And it was an enjoyable sort of idleness. The river was full of life and animation as they glided along; fitful shadows and bursts of sunshine crossed the foliage and pasture-lands of the flat shores; the yellow surface of the stream was broken with gleams of silver; and always, when this somewhat tame and peaceful and pretty landscape tended to become monotonous, they had on this side or that the spectacle of one of those tall and beautiful yachts rounding on a new tack or creeping steadily up on one of her opponents. They had a sweepstakes, of course; and Macleod drew the favourite. But then he proceeded to explain to Miss White that the handicapping by means of time-allowances made the choice of a favourite a mere matter of guesswork; that the fouling at the start was of but little moment; and that on the whole she ought to exchange yachts with him.

"But if the chances are all equal, why should your yacht be better than mine?" said she.

The argument was unanswerable; but she took the favourite for all that, because he wished her to do so; and she tendered him in return the bit of folded paper with the name of a rival yacht on it. It had been in her purse for a minute or two. It was scented when she handed it to him.

"I should like to go to the Mediterranean in one of those beautiful yachts," she said, looking away across the troubled waters; "and lie and dream under the blue skies. I should want

no other occupation: that would be real idleness. With a breath of wind now and then to temper the heat; and an awning over the deck; and a lot of books. Life would go by like a dream."

Her eyes were distant and pensive. To fold the bits of paper, she had taken off her gloves: he regarded the small white hands, with the blue veins, and the pink almond-shaped nails. She was right. That was the sort of existence for one so fine, and pale, and perfect even to the finger-tips. *Rose-leaf—Rose-leaf—what faint wind will carry you away to the south?*

At this moment the band struck up a lively air. What was it?

> "*O this is no my ain lassie,*
> *Fair though the lassie be!*"

"You are in great favour to-day, Hugh," Mrs. Ross said to her husband. "You will have to ask the bandmaster to lunch with us."

But this sharp alterative of a well-known air had sent Macleod's thoughts flying away northward, to scenes far different from these flat shores, and to a sort of boating very different from this summer sailing. Janet, too: what was she thinking of—far away in Castle Dare? Of the wild morning on which she insisted on crossing to one of the Treshnish islands, because of the sick child of the shepherd there; and of the open herring-smack, and she sitting on the ballast-stones; and of the fierce gale of wind and rain that hid the island from their sight; and of her landing, drenched to the skin, and with the salt water running from her hair and down her face?

"Now for lunch," said Colonel Ross; and they went below.

The bright little saloon was decorated with flowers; the coloured glass on the table looked pretty enough; here was a pleasant break in the monotony of the day. It was an occasion, too, for assiduous helpfulness, and gentle inquiries, and patient attention. They forgot about the various chances of the yachts. They could not at once have remembered the name of the favourite. And there was a good deal of laughter and pleasant chatting, while the band overhead—heard through the open sky-light—still played—

"O this is no my ain lassie,
Kind though the lassie be!"

And behold! when they went up on deck again, they had got ahead of all the yachts, and were past the forts at the mouth of the Medway, and were out on an open space of yellowish-green water that showed where the tide of the sea met the current of the river. And away down there in the south a long spur of land ran out at the horizon; and the sea immediately under was still and glassy, so that the neck of land seemed projected into the sky—a sort of gigantic razor-fish suspended in the silvery clouds. Then, to give the yachts time to overtake them, they steamed over to a mighty ironclad that lay at anchor there; and as they came near her vast black bulk they lowered their flag, and the band played "Rule Britannia!" The salute was returned; the officer on the high quarter-deck raised his cap; they steamed on.

In due course of time they reached the Nore light-ship; and there they lay and drifted about until the yachts should come up. Long distances now separated that summer fleet; but as they came along, lying well over before the brisk breeze, it was obvious that the spaces of time between the combatants would not be great. And is not this Miss White's vessel, the favourite in the betting, that comes sheering through the water with white foam at her bows? Surely she is more than her time-allowance ahead? And on this tack will she get clear round the squat little light-ship; or is there not a danger of her carrying off a bowsprit? With what an ease and majesty she comes along! scarcely dipping to the slight summer waves; while they on board notice that she has put out her long spinnaker boom, ready to hoist a great ballooner as soon as she is round the light-ship and running home before the wind. The speed at which she cuts the water is now visible enough as she obscures for a second or so the hull of the light-ship. In another second she has sheered round; and then the great spinnaker bulges out with the breeze; and away she goes up the river again. Chronometers are in request. It is only a matter of fifty seconds that her nearest rival, now coming sweeping along, has to make up. But what is this

that happens just as the enemy has got round the Nore? There is a cry of "Man overboard!" The spinnaker boom has caught the careless skipper and pitched him clean into the plashing waters, where he floats about, not as yet certain, probably, what course his vessel will take. She at once brings her head up to wind, and puts about; but meanwhile a small boat from the light-ship has picked up the unhappy skipper, and is now pulling hard to strike the course of the yacht on her new tack. In another minute or two he is on board again; and away she goes for home.

"I think you have won the sweepstakes, Miss White," Macleod said. "Your enemy has lost eight minutes."

She was not thinking of sweepstakes. She seemed to have been greatly frightened by the accident.

"It would have been so dreadful to see a man drowned before your eyes—in the midst of a mere holiday excursion."

"Drowned?" he cried. "There? If a sailor lets himself get drowned in this water with all these boats about he deserves it."

"But there are many sailors who cannot swim at all."

"More shame for them," said he.

"Why, Sir Keith," said Mrs. Ross, laughing, "do you think that all people have been brought up to an amphibious life like yourself? I suppose in your country, what with the rain and the mist, you seldom know whether you are on sea or shore?"

"That is quite true," said he gravely. "And the children are all born with fins. And we can hear the mermaids singing all day long. And when we want to go anywhere we get on the back of a dolphin."

But he looked at Gertrude White. What would she say about that far land that she had shown such a deep interest in? There was no raillery at all in her low voice as she spoke.

"I can very well understand," she said, "how the people there fancied they heard the mermaids singing—amidst so much mystery—and with the awfulness of the sea around them."

"But we have had living singers," said Macleod, "and that amongst the Macleods too. The most famous of all the song-writers of the Western Highlands was Mary Macleod that was born in Harris—Mairi nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, they called her

—that is, Mary the daughter of Red Alister. Macleod of Dunvegan wished her not to make any more songs: but she could not cease the making of songs. And there was another Macleod—Fionaghal they called her—that is, the Fair Stranger. I do not know why they called her the Fair Stranger—perhaps she came to the Highlands from some distant place. And I think if you were going amongst the people there at this very day, they would call you the Fair Stranger."

He spoke quite naturally and thoughtlessly; his eyes met hers only for a second; he did not notice the soft touch of pink that suffused the delicately-tinted cheek.

The booming of a gun told them that the last yacht had rounded the light-ship; the band struck up a lively air; and presently the steamer was steaming off in the wake of the procession of yachts. There was now no more fear that Miss White should be late. The breeze had kept up well, and had now shifted a point or two to the east; so that the yachts, with their great ballooners, were running pretty well before the wind. The lazy abandonment of the day became more complete than ever. Careless talk and laughter; an easy curiosity about the fortunes of the race; tea in the saloon, with the making up of two bouquets of white roses, sweet-peas, fuchsias, and ferns; the day passed lightly and swiftly enough. It was a summer day; full of pretty trifles. Macleod, surrendering to the fascination, began to wonder what life would be if it were all a show of June colours and a sound of dreamy music: for one thing he could not imagine this sensitive, beautiful, pale, fine creature otherwise than as surrounded by an atmosphere of delicate attentions and pretty speeches, and sweet low laughter.

They got into their special train again at Gravesend, and were whirled up to London. At Charing Cross he bade good-bye to Miss White, who was driven off by Mr. and Mrs. Ross, along with their other guest. In the light of the clear June evening he walked rather absently up to his rooms.

There was a letter lying on the table. He seized it and opened it with gladness. It was from his cousin Janet—and the mere sight of it seemed to revive him like a gust of keen wind from the sea. What had she to say? About the grumblings of

Donald, who seemed to have no more pride in his pipes now the master was gone? About the anxiety of his mother over the reports of the keepers? About the upsetting of a dog-cart on the road to Loch Buy? He had half resolved to go to the theatre again that evening—getting, if possible, into some corner where he might pursue his profound psychological investigations unseen—but now he thought he would not go. He would spend the evening in writing a long letter to his cousin, telling her and the mother about all the beautiful, fine, gay, summer life he had seen in London—so different from anything he had seen in Fort William, or Inverness, or even in Edinburgh. After dinner he sate down to this agreeable task. What had he to write about except brilliant rooms, and beautiful flowers, and costumes such as would have made Janet's eyes wide: of all the delicate luxuries of life, and happy idleness, and the careless enjoyment of people whose only thought was about a new pleasure? He gave a minute description of all the places he had been to see—except the theatre. He mentioned the names of the people who had been kind to him; but he said nothing about Gertrude White.

Not that she was altogether absent from his thoughts. Sometimes his fancy fled away from the sheet of paper before him, and saw strange things. Was this Fionaghal, the Fair Stranger,—this maiden who had come over the seas to the dark shores of the isles—this king's daughter clad in white, with her yellow hair down to her waist, and bands of gold on her wrists? And what does she sing to the lashing waves but songs of high courage, and triumph, and welcome to her brave lover coming home with plunder through the battling seas? Her lips are parted with her singing; but her glance is bold and keen: she has the spirit of a king's daughter, let her come from whence she may.

Or is Fionaghal, the Fair Stranger, this poorly-drest lass, who boils the potatoes over the rude peat-fire—and croons her songs of suffering and of the cruel drowning in the seas—so that from hut to hut they carry her songs, and the old wives' tears start afresh to think of their brave sons lost years and years ago?

Neither Fionaghal is she—this beautiful, pale woman, with her sweet, modern English speech, and her delicate, sensitive ways, and her hand that might be crushed like a rose-leaf.

There is a shimmer of summer around her; flowers lie in her lap: tender observances encompass and shelter her. Not for her the biting winds of the northern seas; but rather the soft luxurious idleness of placid waters, and blue skies, and shadowy shores. . . . . *Rose-leaf—Rose-leaf—what faint wind will carry you away to the south?*

CHAPTER VII.

THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

Late one night a carefully-dressed elderly gentleman applied his latch-key to the door of a house in Bury-street, St. James's, and was about to enter without any great circumspection, when he was suddenly met by a white phantom, which threw him off his legs, and dashed outwards into the street. The language that the elderly gentleman used, as he picked himself up, need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the white phantom was the dog Oscar, who had been shut in a minute before by his master, and who now, after one or two preliminary dashes up and down the street, very soon perceived the tall figure of Macleod, and made joyfully after him. But Oscar knew that he had acted wrongly; and was ashamed to show himself; so he quietly slunk along at his master's heels. The consequence of this was that the few loiterers about beheld the very unusual spectacle of a tall young gentleman walking down Bury-street and into King-street dressed in full Highland costume and followed by a white and lemon collie. No other person going to the Caledonian fancy-dress ball was so attended.

Macleod made his way through the carriages, crossed the pavement and entered the passage. Then he heard some scuffling behind; and he turned.

"Let alone my dog, you fellow!" said he, making a step

forward for the man had got hold of Oscar by the head, and was hauling him out.

"Is he your dog, sir?" said he.

Oscar himself answered by wrestling himself free, and taking refuge by his master's legs, though he still looked guilty.

"Yes, he is my dog; and a nice fix he has got me into," said Macleod, standing aside to let the Empress Maria Theresa pass by in her resplendent costume. "I suppose I must walk home with him again. Oscar, Oscar! how dare you?"

"If you please, sir," said a juvenile voice behind him, "If Mr. —— will let me, I will take the dog. I know where to tie him up."

Macleod turned.

"*Cò an so?*" said he, looking down at the chubby-faced boy in the kilt, who had his pipes under his arm. "Don't you know the Gaelic?"

"I am only learning," said the young musician. "Will I take the dog, sir?"

"March along, then, *phiobaire bhig!*" Macleod said. "He will follow me, if he will not follow you."

Little Piper turned aside into a large hall which had been transformed into a sort of waiting-room; and here Macleod found himself in the presence of a considerable number of children, half of them girls, half of them boys, all dressed in tartan, and seated on the forms along the walls. The children, who were half asleep at this time of the night, woke up with sudden interest at sight of the beautiful collie; and at the same moment Little Piper explained to the gentleman who was in charge of these young ones that the dog had to be tied up somewhere, and that a small adjoining room would answer that purpose. The proposal was most courteously entertained. Macleod, Mr. ——, and Little Piper walked along to this side room, and there Oscar was properly secured.

"And I will get him some water, sir, if he wants it," said the boy in the kilt.

"Very well," Macleod said. "And I will give you my thanks for it; for that is all that a Highlander, and especially a piper, expects for a kindness. And I hope you will learn the Gaelic

soon, my boy. And do you know *Cumhadh na Cloinne?* No, it is too difficult for you; but I think if I had the chanter between my fingers myself, I could let you hear *Cumhadh na Cloinne.*"

"I am sure John Maclean can play it," said the small piper.

"Who is he?"

The gentleman in charge of the youngsters explained that John Maclean was the eldest of the juvenile pipers, five others of whom were in attendance.

"I think," said Macleod, "that I am coming down in a little time to make the acquaintance of your young pipers, if you will let me."

He passed up the broad staircase, and into the empty supper-room, from which a number of entrances showed him the strange scene being enacted in the larger hall. Who were these people who were moving to the sound of rapid music? A clown in a silken dress of many colours, with bells to his cap and wrists, stood at one of the doors; Macleod became his fellow-spectator of what was going forward. A beautiful Tyrolienne, in a dress of black velvet and silver, with her yellow hair hanging in two plaits down her back, passed into the room accompanied by Charles the First in a large wig and cloak; and the next moment they were whirling along in the waltz, coming into innumerable collisions with all the celebrated folk who ever lived in history. And who were those gentlemen in the scarlet collars and cuffs, who but for these adornments would have been in ordinary evening dress? He made bold to ask the friendly clown, who was staring in a pensive manner at the rushing couples.

"They call it the Windsor uniform," said the clown. "*I* think it mean. I sha'n't come in a fancy dress again, if stitching on a red collar will do."

At this moment the waltz came to an end; and the people began to walk up and down the spacious apartment. Macleod entered the throng, to look about him. And soon he perceived, in one of the little stands at the side of the hall, the noble lady who had asked him to go to this assembly, and forthwith he made his way through the crowd to her. He was most graciously received.

"Shall I tell you a secret, Lady——?" said he. "You know the children belonging to the charity—they are all below—and they are sitting doing nothing, and they are all very tired and half-asleep. It is a shame to keep them there"——

"But the Prince hasn't come yet; and they must be marched round: they show that we are not making fools of ourselves for nothing."

A sharper person than Macleod might have got in a pretty compliment here; for this lady was charmingly dressed as Flora Macdonald; but he merely said—

'Very well; perhaps it is necessary. But I think I can get them some amusement, if you will only keep the director of them, that is Mr. ——, out of the way. Now shall I send him to you? Will you talk to him?"

"What do you mean to do?"

"I want to give them a dance. Why should you have all the dancing up here?"

"Mind, I am not responsible. What shall I talk to him about?"

Macleod considered for a moment.

"Tell him that I will take the whole of the girls and boys to the Crystal Palace for a day, if it is permissible; and ask him what it will cost, and all about the arrangements."

"Seriously?"

"Yes. Why not? They can have a fine run in the grounds; and six pipers to play for them. I will ask them now whether they will go."

He left and went down-stairs. He had seen but few people in the hall above whom he knew. He was not fond of dancing, though he knew the elaborate variations of the reel. And here was a bit of practical amusement.

"Oh, Mr. ——," said he, with great seriousness, "I am desired by Lady —— to say that she would like to see you for a moment or two. She wishes to ask you some questions about your young people."

"The Prince may come at any moment," said Mr. ——, doubtfully.

"He won't be in such a hurry as all that, surely!"

So the worthy man went up-stairs; and the moment he was gone Macleod shut the door.

"Now, you piper boys!" he called aloud; "get up, and play us a reel! We are going to have a dance. You are all asleep, I believe. Come, girls, stand up—you that know the reel, you will keep to this end. Boys, come out! You that can dance a reel come to this end; the others will soon pick it up. Now, piper boys, have you got the steam up? What can you give us now? *Monymusk?* or the *Marquis of Huntley's Fling?* or *Miss Johnston?* Nay, stay a bit—don't you know *Mrs. Macleod of Raasay?*"

"Yes—yes—yes—yes—yes—yes!" came from the six pipers all standing in a row, with the drones over their shoulders and the chanters in their fingers.

"Very well, then—off you go! Now, boys and girls, are you all ready? Pipers, *Mrs. Macleod of Raasay!*"

For a second there was a confused roaring on the long drones; then the shrill pipes broke clear away into the wild reel; and presently the boys and girls, who were at first laughingly shy and embarrassed, began to make such imitations of the reel-figure, which they had seen often enough, as led to a vast amount of scrambling and jollity, if it was not particularly accurate. The most timid of the young ones soon picked up courage. Here and there one of the older boys gave a whoop that would have done justice to a wedding-dance in a Highland barn.

"Put your lungs into it, pipers!" Macleod cried. "Well played, boys! You are fit to play before a prince!"

The round cheeks of the boys were red with their blowing; they tapped their toes on the ground as proudly as if every one of them was a MacCruimin; the wild noise in this big empty hall grew more furious than ever—when suddenly there was an awful silence. The pipers dropped their pipes; the children, suddenly stopping in their merriment, cast one awestruck glance towards the door; and then slunk back to their seats. They had observed not only Mr. ——, but also the Prince himself. Macleod was left standing alone in the middle of the floor.

"Sir Keith Macleod?" said His Royal Highness, with a smile.

Macleod bowed low.

"Lady —— told me what you were about. I thought we could have had a peep unobserved; or we should not have broken in on the romp of the children."

"I think your Royal Highness could make amends for that," said Macleod.

There was an inquiring glance.

"If your Royal Highness would ask some one to see that each of the children has an orange, and a tart, and a shilling, it would be some compensation to them for being kept up so late."

"I think that might be done," said the Prince, as he turned to leave. "And I am glad to have made your acquaintance, although in"——

"In the character of a dancing-master," said Macleod gravely.

After having once more visited Oscar, in the company of Piobaire Beag, Macleod went up again to the brilliantly-lit hall; and here he found that a further number of his friends had arrived. Among them was young Ogilvie, in the tartan of the 93rd Highlanders; and very smart indeed the boy-officer looked in his uniform. Mrs. Ross was here too; and she was busy in assisting to get up the Highland quadrille. When she asked Macleod if he would join in it, he answered by asking her to be his partner, as he would be ashamed to display his ignorance before an absolute stranger. Mrs. Ross most kindly undertook to pilot him through the not elaborate intricacies of the dance; and they were fortunate in having the set made up entirely of their own friends.

Then the procession of the children took place; and the fantastically dressed crowd formed a lane to let the homely-clad lads and lasses pass along, with the six small pipers proudly playing a march at their head.

He stopped the last of the children, for a second.

"Have you got a tart, and an orange, and a shilling?"

"No, sir."

"I have got the word of a prince for it," he said to himself,

as he went out of the room. "And they shall not go home with empty pockets."

As he was coming up the staircase again to the ball-room, he was preceded by two figures that were calculated to attract any one's notice by the picturesqueness of their costume. The one stranger was apparently an old man, who was dressed in a Florentine costume of the fourteenth century—a cloak of sombre red, with a flat cap of black velvet, one long tail of which was thrown over the left shoulder and hung down behind. A silver collar hung from his neck across his breast: other ornament there was none. His companion, however, drew all eyes towards her as the two passed into the ball-room. She was dressed in imitation of Gainsborough's portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire; and her symmetrical figure and well-poised head admirably suited the long-trained costume of blue satin, with its *fichu* of white muslin, the bold, coquettish hat and feathers, and the powdered puffs and curls that descended to her shoulders. She had a gay air with her too. She bore her head proudly. The patches on her cheek seemed not half so black as the blackness of her eyes, so full of a dark mischievous light were they; and the redness of the lips—a trifle artificial, no doubt—as she smiled, seemed to add to the glittering whiteness of her teeth. The proud, laughing, gay coquette: no wonder all eyes were for a moment turned to her, in envy or in admiration.

Macleod, following these two, and finding that his old companion, the pensive clown in cap and bells, was still at his post of observation at the door, remained there also for a minute or two; and noticed that among the first to recognise the two strangers was young Ogilvie, who, with laughing surprise in his face, came forward to shake hands with them. Then there was some further speech; the band began to play a gentle and melodious waltz; the middle of the room cleared somewhat; and presently her Grace of Devonshire was whirled away by the young Highland officer, her broad-brimmed hat rather overshadowing him, notwithstanding the pronounced colours of his plaid. Macleod could not help following this couple with his eyes, whithersoever they went. In any part of the rapidly moving crowd he could always make out that one figure; and once or twice as they passed

him it seemed to him that the brilliant beauty, with her powdered hair, and her flashing bright eyes, and her merry lips, regarded him for an instant; and then he could have imagined that in a bygone century—

"Sir Keith Macleod, I think?"

The old gentleman with the grave and scholarly cap of black velvet and the long cloak of sober red, held out his hand. The folds of the velvet hanging down from the cap rather shadowed his face; but all the same Macleod instantly recognised him—fixing the recognition by means of the gold spectacles.

"Mr. White?" said he.

"I am more disguised than you are," the old gentleman said, with a smile. "It is a foolish notion of my daughter's, but she would have me come."

His daughter! Macleod turned in a bewildered way to that gay crowd under the brilliant lights.

"Was that Miss White?" said he.

"The Duchess of Devonshire. Didn't you recognise her? I am afraid she will be very tired to-morrow; but she would come."

He caught sight of her again. That woman—with the dark eyes full of fire — and the dashing air — and the audacious smile ——? He could have believed this old man to be mad. Or was he only the father of a witch—of an illusive *ignis fatuus* —of some mocking Ariel darting into a dozen shapes to make fools of the poor simple souls of earth?

"No," he stammered, "I—I did not recognise her. I thought the lady who came with you had intensely dark eyes."

"She is said to be very clever in making up," her father said, coolly and sententiously. "It is a part of her art that is not to be despised. It is quite as important as a gesture or a tone of voice in creating the illusion at which she aims. I do not know whether actresses, as a rule, are careless about it, or only clumsy; but they rarely succeed in making their appearance homogeneous. A trifle too much here; a trifle too little there; and the illusion is spoiled. Then you see a painted woman; not the character she is presenting. Did you observe my daughter's eyebrows?"

"No, sir, I did not," said Macleod, humbly.

"Here she comes. Look at them."

But how could he look at her eyebrows, or at any trick of making up, when the whole face with its new excitement of colour, its parted lips and lambent eyes, was throwing its fascination upon him? She came forward laughing, and yet with a certain shyness. He would fain have turned away.

The Highlanders are superstitious. Did he fear being bewitched? Or what was it that threw a certain coldness over his manner? The fact of her having danced with young Ogilvie? Or the ugly reference made by her father to her eyebrows? He had greatly admired this painted stranger, when he thought she was a stranger; he seemed less to admire the artistic make-up of Miss Gertrude White.

The merry Duchess, playing her part admirably, charmed all eyes but his; and yet she was so kind as to devote herself to her father and him, refusing invitations to dance, and chatting to them—with those brilliant lips smiling—about the various features of the gay scene before them. Macleod avoided looking at her face.

"What a bonny boy your friend Mr. Ogilvie is," said she, glancing across the room.

He did not answer.

"But he does not look much of a soldier," she continued. "I don't think I should be afraid of him, if I were a man."

He answered, somewhat distantly,

"It is not safe to judge that way—especially of any one of Highland blood. If there is fighting in his blood, he will fight when the proper time comes. And we have a good Gaelic saying—it has a great deal of meaning in it; it says—*You do not know what sword is in the scabbard until it is drawn.*"

"What did you say was the proverb?" she asked; and for a second her eyes met his—but she immediately withdrew them, startled by the cold austerity of his look.

"*You do not know what sword is in the scabbard until it is drawn,*" said he, carelessly. "There is a good deal of meaning in that saying."



LAUREL COTTAGE.

CHAPTER VIII

LAUREL COTTAGE.

A SMALL, quaint, old-fashioned house in South Bank, Regent's Park; two maidens in white in the open verandah; around them the abundant foliage of June, unruffled by any breeze; and down at the foot of the steep garden the still canal, its surface mirroring the soft translucent greens of the trees and bushes above, and the gaudier colours of a barge lying moored on the northern side. The elder of the two girls is seated in a rocking-chair; she appears to have been reading, for her right hand, hanging down, still holds a thin MS. book covered with coarse brown paper. The younger is lying at her feet, with her head thrown back in her sister's lap, and her face turned up to the clear June skies. There are some roses about this verandah; and the still air is sweet with them.

"And of all the parts you ever played in," she says, "which one did you like the best, Gerty?"

"This one," is the gentle answer.

"What one?"

"Being at home with you and papa, and having no bother at all, and nothing to think of."

"I don't believe it," says the other, with the brutal frankness of thirteen. "You couldn't live without the theatre, Gerty—and the newspapers talking about you—and people praising you—and bouquets"——

"Couldn't I?" says Miss White, with a smile, as she gently lays her hand on her sister's curls.

"No," continues the wise young lady. "And besides, this pretty, quiet life would not last. You would have to give up playing that part. Papa is getting very old now; and he often talks about what may happen to us. And you know, Gerty, that though it is very nice for sisters to say they will never and never leave each other, it doesn't come off, does it? There is only one thing I see for you—and that is to get married."

"Indeed."

It is easy to fence with a child's prattle. She might have amused herself by encouraging this chatterbox to go through the list of their acquaintances, and pick out a goodly choice of suitors. She might have encouraged her to give expression to her profound views of the chances and troubles of life, and the safeguards that timid maidens may seek. But she suddenly said, in a highly matter-of-fact manner—

"What you say is quite true, Carry, and I've thought of it several times. It is a very bad thing for an actress to be left without a father, or husband, or brother as her ostensible guardian. People are always glad to hear stories—and to make them—about actresses. You would be no good at all, Carry"——

"Very well, then," the younger sister said promptly, "you've got to get married. And to a rich man, too; who will buy you a theatre, and let you do what you like in it."

Miss Gertrude White—whatever she may have thought of this speech—was bound to rebuke the shockingly mercenary ring of it.

"For shame, Carry! Do you think people marry from such motives as that?"

"I don't know," said Carry; but she had, at least, guessed.

"I should like my husband to have money, certainly," Miss White said, frankly; and here she flung the MS. book from her, on to a neighbouring chair. "I should like to be able to refuse parts that did not suit me. I should like to be able to take just such engagements as I chose. I should like to go to Paris for a whole year—and study hard"——

"Your husband might not wish you to remain an actress," said Miss Carry.

"Then he would never be my husband," the elder sister said, with precision. "I have not worked hard for nothing. Just when I begin to think I can do something—when I think I can get beyond those coquettish, drawing-room, simpering parts that people run after now—just when the very name of Mrs. Siddons, or Rachel, or any of the great actresses makes my heart jump—when I have ambition, and a fair chance, and all that—do you think I am to give the whole thing up, and sink quietly into the

position of Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Smith, who is a very nice lady, no doubt, and very respectable, and lives a quiet and orderly life, with no greater excitement than scheming to get big people to go to her garden-parties?"

She certainly seemed very clear on that point.

"I don't see that men are so ready to give up their profession, when they marry, in order to devote themselves to domestic life, even when they have plenty of money. Why should all the sacrifice be on the side of the woman? But I know if I have to choose between my art and a husband, I shall continue to do without a husband."

Miss Carry had risen, and put one arm round her sister's neck, while with the other she stroked the soft brown hair over the smooth forehead.

"And it shall not be taken away from its pretty theatre, it sha'n't " said she, pettingly; "and it shall not be asked to go away with any ugly Bluebeard, and be shut up in a lonely house"——

"Go away, Carry," said she, releasing herself. "I wonder why you began talking such nonsense. What do you know about all those things?"

"Oh! very well," said the child, turning away with a pout; and she pulled a rose, and began to take its petals off, one by one, with her lips. "Perhaps I don't know. Perhaps I haven't studied your manœuvres on the stage, Miss Gertrude White. Perhaps I never saw the newspapers declaring that it was all so very natural and life-like"—— She flung two or three rose-petals at her sister. ——"I believe you're the biggest flirt that ever lived, Gerty. You could make any man you liked marry you in ten minutes."

"I wish I could manage to have certain school-girls whipped and sent to bed."

At this moment there appeared at the open French window an elderly woman of Flemish features and extraordinary breadth of bust.

"Shall I put dressing in the salad, Miss?" she said, with scarcely any trace of foreign accent.

"Not yet, Marie," said Miss White. "I will make the

dressing first. Bring me a large plate, and the cruet-stand, and a spoon and fork, and some salt."

Now when these things had been brought, and when Miss White had set about preparing this salad-dressing in a highly-scientific manner, a strange thing occurred. Her sister seemed to have been attacked by a sudden fit of madness. She had caught up a light shawl, which she extended from hand to hand, as if she were dancing with some one, and then she proceeded to execute a slow waltz in this circumscribed space, humming the improvised music in a mystical and rhythmical manner. And what were these dark utterances that the inspired one gave forth, as she glanced from time to time at her sister and the plate?

"'*O, a Highland lad my love was born,*
And the Lowland laws he held in scorn.'"

"Carry, don't make a fool of yourself!" said the other, flushing angrily.

Carry flung her imaginary partner aside.

"There is no use making any pretence," said she, sharply. "You know quite well why you are making that salad-dressing."

"Did you never see me make salad-dressing before?" said the other, quite as sharply.

"You know it is simply because Sir Keith Macleod is coming to lunch. I forgot all about it. Oh, and that's why you had the clean curtains put up yesterday!"

What else had this precocious brain ferreted out?

"Yes, and that's why you bought papa a new neck-tie," continued the tormentor; and then she added, triumphantly, "*But he hasn't put it on this morning—ha, Gerty?*"

A calm and dignified silence is the best answer to the fiendishness of thirteen. Miss White went on with the making of the salad-dressing. She was considered very clever at it. Her father had taught her; but he never had the patience to carry out his own precepts. Besides, brute force is not wanted for the work; what you want is the self-denying assiduity and the dexterous light-handedness of a woman.

A smart young maidservant, very trimly dressed, made her appearance.

"Sir Keith Macleod, miss," said she.

"Oh, Gerty, you're caught!" muttered the fiend.

But Miss White was equal to the occasion. The small white fingers plied the fork without a tremor.

"Ask him to step this way, please," she said.

And then the subtle imagination of this demon of thirteen jumped to another conclusion.

"Oh, Gerty, you want to show him that you are a good housekeeper—that you can make salad"——

But the imp was silenced by the appearance of Macleod himself. He looked tall as he came through the small drawing-room. When he came out on to the balcony, the languid air of the place seemed to acquire a fresh and brisk vitality: he had a bright smile and a resonant voice.

"I have taken the liberty of bringing you a little present, Miss White—no, it is a large present—that reached me this morning," said he. "I want you to see one of our Highland salmon. He is a splendid fellow—twenty-six pounds, four ounces, my landlady says. My cousin Janet sent him to me."

"Oh, but, Sir Keith, we cannot rob you," Miss White said, as she still demurely plied her fork. "If there is any special virtue in a Highland salmon, it will be better appreciated by yourself than by those who don't know."

"The fact is," said he, "people are so kind to me that I scarcely ever am allowed to dine at my lodgings; and you know the salmon should be cooked at once."

Miss Carry had been making a face behind his back, to annoy her sister. She now came forward and said, with a charming innocence in her eyes—

"I don't think you can have it cooked for luncheon, Gerty; for that would look too like bringing your tea in your pocket and getting hot water for twopence. Wouldn't it?"

Macleod turned and regarded this new comer with an unmistakable "Who is this?"—"*Cò an so?*"—in his air

"Oh, that is my sister Carry, Sir Keith," said Miss White. "I forgot you had not seen her."

"How do you do?" said he, in a kindly way; and for a

second he put his hand on the light curls as her father might have done. "I suppose you like having holidays?"

From that moment she became his deadly enemy. To be patted on the head, as if she were a child, an infant—and that in the presence of the sister whom she had just been lecturing!

"Yes, thank you," said she, with a splendid dignity, as she proudly walked off. She went into the small lobby leading to the door. She called to the little maidservant. She looked at a certain long bag made of matting which lay there, some bits of grass sticking out of one end. "Jane, take this thing downstairs at once! the whole house smells of it."

Meanwhile Miss White had carried her salad-dressing in to Marie; and had gone out again to the verandah, where Macleod was seated. He was charmed with the dreamy stillness and silence of the place—with the hanging foliage all around, and the colours in the steep gardens, and the still waters below.

"I don't know how it is," said he, "but you seem to have much more open houses here than we have. Our houses in the north look cold, and hard, and bare. We should laugh if we saw a place like this near us—it seems to me a sort of a toy-place out of a picture—from Switzerland or some such country. Here you are in the open air—with your own little world around you; and nobody to see you; you might live all your life here, and know nothing about the storms crossing the Atlantic, and the wars in Europe, if only you gave up the newspapers."

"Yes, it is very pretty, and quiet," said she, and the small fingers pulled to pieces one of the rose-leaves that Carry had thrown at her. "But you know one is never satisfied anywhere. If I were to tell you the longing I have to see the very places you describe as being so desolate —— But perhaps papa will take me there some day."

"I hope so," said he; "but I would not call them desolate. They are terrible at times; and they are lonely; and they make you think. But they are beautiful, too—with a sort of splendid beauty and grandeur that goes very near making you miserable. . . . I cannot describe it. You will see for yourself."

Here a bell rang; and at the same moment Mr. White made his appearance.

"How do you do, Sir Keith? Luncheon is ready, my dear—luncheon is ready—luncheon is ready."

He kept muttering to himself as he led the way. They entered a small dining-room; and here, if Macleod had ever heard of actresses having little time to give to domestic affairs, he must have been struck by the exceeding neatness and brightness of everything on the table and around it. The snow-white cover; the brilliant glass and spoons; the carefully arranged, if tiny, bouquets; and the precision with which the smart little maid-servant—the only attendant—waited: all these things showed a household well managed. Nay, this iced claret-cup—was it not of her own composition?—and a pleasanter beverage he had never drunk.

But she seemed to pay little attention to these matters; for she kept glancing at her father, who, as he addressed Macleod from time to time, was obviously nervous and harassed about something. At last she said—

"Papa, what is the matter with you? Has anything gone wrong this morning?"

"Oh, my dear child," said he, "don't speak of it. It is my memory—I fear my memory is going. But we will not trouble our guest about it. I think you were saying, Sir Keith, that you had seen the latest additions to the National Gallery"—

"But what is it, papa?" his daughter insisted.

"My dear, my dear, I know I have the lines somewhere; and Lord —— says that the very first jug fired at the new pottery he is helping shall have these lines on it, and be kept for himself. I know I have both the Spanish original and the English translation somewhere; and all the morning I have been hunting and hunting—for only one line. I think I know the other three—

'OLD WINE TO DRINK.
OLD WRONGS LET SINK.
* * *
OLD FRIENDS IN NEED.'

It is the third line that has escaped me—dear, dear me! I fear my brain is going."

"But I will hunt for it, papa," said she; "I will get the lines for you. Don't you bother."

"No, no, no, child," said he, with somewhat of a pompous air. "You have this new character to study. You must not allow any trouble to disturb the serenity of your mind while you are so engaged. You must give your heart and soul to it, Gerty; you must forget yourself; you must abandon yourself to it—and let it grow up in your mind until the conception is so perfect that there are no traces of the manner of its production left."

He certainly was addressing his daughter; but somehow the formal phrases suggested that he was speaking for the benefit of the stranger. The prim old gentleman continued:

"That is the only way. Art demands absolute self-forgetfulness. You must give yourself to it in complete surrender. People may not know the difference; but the true artist seeks only to be true to himself. You produce the perfect flower; they are not to know of the anxious care—of the agony of tears, perhaps—you have spent on it. But then your whole mind must be given to it; there must be no distracting cares: I will look for the missing line myself."

"I am quite sure, papa," said Miss Carry, spitefully, "that she was far more anxious about these cutlets than about her new part this morning. She was half-a-dozen times down to the kitchen. I didn't see her reading the book much."

"The *res angustæ domi*," said the father sententiously, "sometimes interfere, where people are not too well off. But that is necessary. What is not necessary is that Gerty should take my troubles over to herself, and disturb her formation of this new character, which ought to be growing up in her mind almost insensibly, until she herself will scarcely be aware how real it is. When she steps on to the stage, she ought to be no more Gertrude White than you or I. The artist loses himself. He transfers his soul to his creation. His heart beats in another breast; he sees with other eyes. You will excuse me, Sir Keith; but I keep insisting on this point to my daughter. If she ever becomes a great artist, that will be the secret of her success. And she ought never to cease from cultivating the habit. She ought to be ready at any moment to project herself, as it were, into any

character. She ought to practise so as to make of her own emotions an instrument that she can use at will. It is a great demand that art makes on the life of an artist. In fact, he ceases to live for himself. He becomes merely a medium. His most secret experiences are the property of the world at large, once they have been transfused and moulded by his personal skill.'

And so he continued talking, apparently for the instruction of his daughter, but also giving his guest clearly to understand that Miss Gertrude White was not as other women, but rather as one set apart for the high and inexorable sacrifice demanded by art. At the end of his lecture, he abruptly asked Macleod if he had followed him. Yes, he had followed him; but in rather a bewildered way. Or had he some confused sense of self-reproach, in that he had distracted the contemplation of this pale and beautiful artist, and sent her down-stairs to look after cutlets?

"It seems a little hard, sir," said Macleod to the old man, "that an artist is not to have any life of his or her own at all—that he or she should become merely a—a—a sort of Ten-minutes emotionalist."

It was not a bad phrase for a rude Highlander to have invented on the spur of the moment. But the fact was that some little personal feeling stung him into the speech. He was prepared to resent this tyranny of art. And if he, now, were to see some beautiful, pale slave bound in these iron chains—and being exhibited for the amusement of an idle world—what would the fierce blood of the Macleods say to that debasement? He began to dislike this old man, with his cruel theories, and his oracular speech. But he forbore to have further, or any, argument with him; for he remembered what the Highlanders call "the advice of the bell of Scoon—*the thing that concerns you not, meddle not with.*"

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCESS RIGHINN.

THE people who lived in this land of summer and sunshine and flowers—had they no cares at all? He went out into the garden with these two girls; and they were like two young fawns in their careless play. Miss Carry, indeed, seemed bent on tantalising him by the manner in which she petted, and teased, and caressed her sister—scolding her, quarrelling with her, and kissing her all at once. The grave, gentle, forbearing manner in which the elder sister bore all this was beautiful to see. And then her sudden concern and pity when the wild Miss Carry had succeeded in scratching her finger with the thorn of a rose-bush! It was the tiniest of scratches; and all the blood that appeared was about the size of a pin-head. But Miss White must needs tear up her dainty little pocket-handkerchief, and bind that grievous wound, and condole with the poor victim as though she were suffering untold agonies. It was a pretty sort of idleness. It seemed to harmonise with this still beautiful summer day, and the soft green foliage around, and the quiet air that was sweet with the scent of the flowers of the lime-trees. They say that the Gaelic word for the lower regions, *ifrin*, is derived from *i-bhuirn*, the island of incessant rain. To a Highlander, therefore, must not this land of perpetual summer and sunshine have seemed to be heaven itself?

And even the malicious Carry relented for a moment.

"You said you were going to the Zoological Gardens," she said.

"Yes," he answered, "I am. I have seen everything I want to see in London, but that."

"Because Gerty and I might walk across the Park with you and show you the way."

"I very much wish you would," said he, "if you have nothing better to do."

"I will see if papa does not want me," said Miss White

calmly. She might just as well be walking in Regent's Park as in this small garden.

Presently the three of them set out.

"I am glad of any excuse," she said, with a smile, "for throwing aside that new part. It seems to me insufferably stupid. It is very hard that you should be expected to make a character look natural when the words you have to speak are such as no human being would use in any circumstances whatever."

Oddly enough, he never heard her make even the slightest reference to her profession without experiencing a sharp twinge of annoyance. He did not stay to ask himself why this should be so. Ordinarily, he simply made haste to change the subject.

"Then why should you take the part at all?" said he bluntly.

"Once you have given yourself up to a particular calling, you must accept its little annoyances," she said frankly. "I cannot have everything my own way. I have been very fortunate in other respects. I have had very little of the drudgery of the provinces, though you know that is the best school possible for an actress. And I am sure the money and the care papa has spent on my training—you see, he has no son to send to college. I think he is far more anxious about my succeeding than I am myself."

"But you have succeeded," said Macleod. It was, indeed, the least he could say; with all his dislike of the subject.

"Oh, I do not call that success," said she simply. "That is merely pleasing people by showing them little scenes from their own drawing-rooms transferred to the stage. They like it because it is pretty, and familiar. And people pretend to be very cynical at present—they like things with 'no nonsense about them.' Still, if you happen to be ambitious—or perhaps it is mere vanity?—if you would like to try what is in you"——

"Gerty wants to be a Mrs. Siddons; that's it," said Miss Carry, promptly.

Talking to an actress about her profession; and not having a word of compliment to say! Instead, he praised the noble elms and chestnuts of the park—the broad, white lake, the flowers, the avenues. He was greatly interested by the whizzing by overhead of a brace of duck.

"I suppose you are very fond of animals?" Miss White said.

"I am indeed," said he, suddenly brightening up. "And up at our place I give them all a chance. I don't allow a single weasel or hawk or osprey to be killed—though I have a great deal of trouble about it. But what is the result? I don't know whether there is such a thing as the balance of nature; or whether it is merely that the hawks and weasels and other vermin kill off the sickly birds; but I know that we do have less disease among our birds than I hear of anywhere else. I have sometimes shot a weasel, it is true, when I have run across him as he was hunting a rabbit—you cannot help doing that if you hear the rabbit squealing with fright long before the weasel is at him—but it is against my rule. I give them all a fair field and no favour. I even let the hoodie crow alone, and he is a desperate villain. But there are two animals I put out of the list—I thought there was only one till this week, now there are two; and one of them I hate, the other I fear."

"Fear?" she said: the slight flash of surprise in her eyes was eloquent enough. But he did not notice it.

"Yes," said he, rather gloomily. "I suppose it is superstition —or you may have it in your blood—but the horror I have of the eyes of a snake—I cannot tell you of it. Perhaps I was frightened when I was a child—I cannot remember; or perhaps it was the stories of the old women. The serpent is very mysterious to the people in the Highlands—they have stories of water-snakes in the lochs—and if you get a nest of seven adders with one white one you boil the white one, and the man who drinks the broth knows all things in heaven and earth. In the Lewis they call the serpent *righinn*, that is '*a princess*'; and they say that the serpent is a princess bewitched. But that is from fear—it is a compliment"——

"But surely there are no serpents to be afraid of in the Highlands?" said Miss White. She was looking rather curiously at him.

"No," said he, in the same gloomy way. "The adders run away from you, if you are walking through the heather. If you tread on one, and he bites your boot, what then? He cannot hurt you. But suppose you are out after the deer, and you are

crawling along the heather with your face to the ground, and all at once you see the two small eyes of an adder looking at you and close to you——"

He shuddered slightly—perhaps it was only an expression of disgust.

"I have heard," he continued, "that in parts of Islay they used to be so bad that the farmers would set fire to the heather in a circle, and as the heather burned in and in you could see the snakes and adders twisting and curling in a great ball. We have not many with us. But one day John Begg, that is the schoolmaster, went behind a rock to get a light for his pipe; and he put his head close to the rock to be out of the wind; and then he thought he stirred something with his cap; and the next moment the adder fell on to his shoulder, and bit him in the neck. He was half mad with the fright; but I think the adder must have bitten the cap first and expended its poison; for the schoolmaster was only ill for about two days, and then there was no more of it. But just think of it—an adder getting to your neck"——

"I would rather not think of it," she said, quickly. "What is the other animal—that you hate?"

"Oh!" he said, lightly, "that is a very different affair—that is a parrot that speaks. I was never shut up in a house with one till this week. My landlady's son brought her home one from the West Indies, and she put the cage in a window recess on my landing. At first it was a little amusing; but the constant yelp—it was too much for me. '*Pritty poal! pritty poal!*' I did not mind so much; but when the ugly brute, with its beady eyes and its black snout used to yelp '*Come and kiz me! come and kiz me!*' I grew to hate it. And in the morning too, how was one to sleep? I used to open my door, and fling a boot at it; but that only served for a time. It began again."

"But you speak of it as having been there. What became of it?"

He glanced at her rather nervously—like a schoolboy; and laughed.

"Shall I tell you?" he said, rather shamefacedly. "The murder will be out, sooner or later. It was this morning. I

could stand it no longer. I had thrown both my boots at it; it was no use. I got up a third time, and went out. The window, that looks into a back-yard, was open. Then I opened the parrot's cage. But the fool of an animal did not know what I meant—or it was afraid—and so I caught him by the back of the neck and flung him out. I don't know anything more about him."

"Could he fly?" said the big-eyed Carry, who had been quite interested in this tragic tale.

"I don't know," Macleod said, modestly. "There was no use asking him. All he could say was, '*Come and kiz me!*' and I got tired of that."

"Then you have murdered him!" said the elder sister in an awe-stricken voice; and she pretended to withdraw a bit from him. "I don't believe in the Macleods having become civilised, peaceable people. I believe they would have no hesitation in murdering any one that was in their way."

"Oh, Miss White!" said he in protest, "you must forget what I told you about the Macleods; and you must really believe they were no worse than the others of the same time. Now I was thinking of another story the other day, which I must tell you"——

"Oh, pray don't," she said, "if it is one of those terrible legends!"——

"But I must tell you," said he, "because it is about the Macdonalds; and I want to show you that we had not all the badness of those times. It was Donald Gorm Môr; and his nephew, Hugh Macdonald, who was the heir to the chieftainship, got a number of men to join him in a conspiracy to have his uncle murdered. The chief found it out, and forgave him. That was not like a Macleod," he admitted, "for I never heard of a Macleod of those days forgiving anybody. But again Hugh Macdonald engaged in a conspiracy; and then Donald Gorm Môr thought he would put an end to the nonsense. What did he do? He thrust his nephew into a deep and foul dungeon—so the story says—and left him without food or water for a whole day. Then there was salt beef lowered into the dungeon; and Macdonald devoured the salt beef; for he was starving with

hunger. Then they left him alone. But you can imagine the thirst of a man who has been eating salt beef, and who has had no water for a day or two. He was mad with thirst. Then they lowered a cup into the dungeon—you may imagine the eagerness with which the poor fellow saw it coming down to him—and how he caught it with both his hands. *But it was empty!* And so, having made a fool of him in that way, they left him to die of thirst. That was the Macdonalds, Miss White; not the Macleods."

"Then I am glad of Culloden," said she, with decision. "for destroying such a race of fiends."

"Oh, you must not say that," he protested, laughing. "We should have become quiet and respectable folks without Culloden. Even without Culloden, we should have had penny newspapers all the same; and tourist-boats from Oban to Iona. Indeed you won't find quieter folks anywhere than the Macdonalds and Macleods are now."

"I don't know how far you are to be trusted," said she, pretending to look at him with some doubt.

By this time they had reached the gate of the Gardens.

"Do let us go in, Gerty," said Miss Carry. "You know you always get hints for your dresses from the birds—you would never have thought of that flamingo pink and white if you had not been walking through here"——

"I will go in for a while if you like, Carry," said she; and certainly Macleod was nothing loth.

There were but few people in the Gardens on this afternoon; for all the world was up at the Eton and Harrow cricket-match at Lord's; and there was little visible of 'Arry and his pipe. Macleod began to show more than a schoolboy's delight over the wonders of this strange place. That he was exceedingly fond of animals—always barring the two he had mentioned—was soon abundantly shown. He talked to them as though the mute inquiring eyes could understand him thoroughly. When he came to animals with which he was familiar in the north, he seemed to be renewing acquaintance with old friends; like himself, they were strangers in a strange land.

"Ah," said he to the splendid stag who was walking about

the paddock with his velvety horns held proudly in the air, "what part of the Highlands have you come from? And wouldn't you like now a canter down the dry bed of a stream, on the side of Ben-an-Sloich?"

The hind, with slow and gentle step, and with her nut-brown hide shining in the sun, came up to the bars, and regarded him with those large, clear grey-green eyes—so different from the soft dark eyes of the roe—that had long eyelashes on the upper lid. He rubbed her nose.

"And wouldn't you rather be up on the heather, munching the young grass, and drinking out of the burn?"

They went along to the great cage of the sea-eagles. The birds seemed to pay no heed to what was passing immediately around them. Ever and anon they jerked their head into an attitude of attention; and the golden-brown eye, with its contracted pupil and stern upper lid, seemed to be throwing a keen glance over immeasurable leagues of sea.

"Poor old chap," he said to the one perched high on an old stump, "wouldn't you like to have one sniff of a sea-breeze, and a look round for a heron or two? What do they give you here?—dead fish, I suppose?"

The eagle raised its great wings, and slowly flapped them once or twice, while it uttered a succession of shrill *yawps.*

"Oh, yes," he said, "you could make yourself heard above the sound of the waves. And I think if any of the boys were after your eggs, or your young ones, you could make short work of them with those big wings. Or would you like to have a battle-royal with a seal, and try whether you could pilot the seal in to the shore, or whether the seal would drag you and your fixed claws down to the bottom and drown you?"

There was a solitary kittiwake in a cage devoted to sea-birds, nearly all of which were foreigners.

"You poor little kittiwake," said he, "this is a sad place for you to be in. I think you would rather be out at Ru-Treshanish, even if it was blowing hard, and there was rain about. There was a dead whale came ashore there about a month ago; that would have been something like a feast for you."

"Why," said he, to his human companion, "if I had only

known before! Whenever there was an hour or two with nothing to do, here was plenty of occupation. But I must not keep you too long, Miss White—I could remain here days and weeks."

"You will not go without looking in at the serpents?" said she, with a slight smile.

He hesitated for a second.

"No," said he, "I think I will not go in to see them."

"But you must," said she, cruelly. "You will see they are not such terrible creatures when they are shut up in glass boxes."

He suffered himself to be led along to the reptile house; but he was silent. He entered the last of the three. He stood in the middle of the room, and looked around him in rather a strange way.

"Now come and look at this splendid fellow," said Miss White, who, with her sister, was leaning over the rail. "Look at his splendid bars of colour—do you see the beautiful blue sheen on its scales?"

It was a huge anaconda, its body, as thick as a man's leg, lying coiled up in a circle, its flat ugly head reposing in the middle. He came a bit nearer. "Hideous!" was all he said. And then his eyes were fixed on the eyes of the animal—the lidless eyes, with their perpetual, glassy stare. He had thought at first they were closed; but now he saw that that opaque yellow substance was covered by a glassy coating, while in the centre there was a small slit as if cut by a penknife. The great coils slowly expanded and fell again, as the animal breathed; otherwise the fixed stare of those yellow eyes might have been taken for the stare of death.

"I don't think the anaconda is poisonous at all," said she, lightly.

"But if you were to meet that beast in a jungle," said he, "what difference would that make?"

He spoke reproachfully, as if she were luring him into some secret place, to have him slain with poisonous fangs. He passed on from that case to the others, unwillingly. The room was still. Most of the snakes would have seemed dead, but for the

malign stare of the beaded eyes. He seemed anxious to get out; the atmosphere of the place was hot and oppressive.

But just at the door there was a case, some quick motion in which caught his eye; and despite himself he stopped to look. The inside of this glass box was alive with snakes — raising their heads in the air—slimily crawling over each other—the small, black-forked tongues shooting in and out, the black points of eyes glassily staring. And the object that had moved quickly was a wretched little yellow frog, that was now motionless in a dish of water—its eyes apparently starting out of its head with horror. A snake made its appearance over the edge of the dish. The shooting black tongue approached the head of the frog; and then the long, sinuous body glided along the edge of the dish again — the frog meanwhile being too paralysed with fear to move. A second afterwards the frog, apparently recovering, sprang clean out of the basin; but it was only to alight on the backs of two or three of the reptiles lying coiled up together. It made another spring, and got into a corner, among some grass. But along that side of the case another of those small, flat, yellow-marked heads was slowly creeping along, propelled by the squirming body; and again the frog made a sudden spring, this time leaping once more into the shallow water, where it stood and panted, with its eyes dilated. And now a snake that had crawled up the side of the case put out its long neck as if to see whither it should proceed. There was nothing to lay hold of. The head swayed and twisted—the forked tongue shooting out — and at last the snake fell away from its hold, and splashed right into the basin of water, on the top of the frog. There was a wild shooting this way and that—but Macleod did not see the end of it. He had uttered some slight exclamation—and got into the open air, as one being suffocated—and there were drops of perspiration on his forehead, and a trembling of horror and disgust had seized him. His two companions followed him out.

"I feel rather faint," said he, in a low voice—and he did not turn to look at them as he spoke — "the air is close in that room."

They moved away. He looked around—at the beautiful green of the trees, and the blue sky, and the sunlight on the path —

God's world was getting to be more wholesome again, and the choking sensation of disgust was going from his throat. He seemed, however, rather anxious to get away from this place. There was a gate close by; he proposed they should go out by that. As he walked back with them to South Bank, they chatted about many of the animals—the two girls in especial being much interested in certain pheasants, whose colours of plumage, they thought, would look very pretty in a dress — but he never referred, either then or at any future time, to his visit to the reptile house. Nor did it occur to Miss White, in this idle conversation, to ask him whether his Highland blood had inherited any other qualities besides that instinctive and deadly horror of serpents.

CHAPTER X.

LAST NIGHTS.

"Good night, Macleod! — good night! — good night!" The various voices came from the top of a drag. They were addressed to one of two young men who stood on the steps of the Star and Garter at Richmond—black figures in the blaze of light. And now the people on the drag had finally ensconced themselves; and the ladies had drawn their ample cloaks more completely round their gay costumes; and the two grooms were ready to set free the heads of the leaders. "Good night, Macleod!" Lord Beauregard called again; and then, with a little preliminary prancing of the leaders, away swung the big vehicle through the clear darkness of the sweet-scented summer night.

"It was awfully good-natured of Beauregard to bring six of your people down and take them back again," observed Lieutenant Ogilvie to his companion. "He wouldn't do it for most folks. He wouldn't do it for me. But then you have the grand

air, Macleod. You seem to be conferring a favour when you get one."

"The people have been very kind to me," said Macleod simply. "I do not know why. I wish I could take them all up to Castle Dare, and entertain them as a prince could entertain people——"

"I want to talk to you about that, Macleod," said his companion. "Shall we go up-stairs again? I have left my hat and coat there."

They went up-stairs, and entered a long chamber which had been formed by the throwing of two rooms into one. The one apartment had been used as a sort of withdrawing-room; in the other stood the long banquet-table, still covered with bright-coloured flowers, and dishes of fruit, and decanters and glasses. Ogilvie sat down, lit a cigar, and poured himself out some claret.

"Macleod," said he, "I am going to talk to you like a father. I hear you have been going on in a mad way. Surely you know that a bachelor coming up to London for a season—and being asked about by people who are precious glad to get unmarried men to their houses—is not expected to give these swell dinner parties? And then, it seems, you have been bringing down all your people in drags. What do those flowers cost you? I dare say this is Lafitte, now?"

"And if it is, why not drink it, and say no more about it? I think they enjoyed themselves pretty well this evening—don't you, Ogilvie?"

"Yes, yes—but then, my dear fellow, the cost! You will say it is none of my business; but what would your decent, respectable mother say to all this extravagance?"

"Ah," said Macleod, "that is just the thing—I should have more pleasure in my little dinner parties if only the mother and Janet were here to see. I think the table would look a good deal better if my mother was at the head of it. And the cost?—oh, I am only following out her instructions. She would not have people think that I was insensible to the kindness that has been shown me; and then we cannot ask all those good friends up to Castle Dare—it is an out-of-the-way place—and there are no flowers on the dining-table there——"

He laughed as he looked at the beautiful things before him: they would look strange in the gaunt hall of Castle Dare.

"Why," said he, "I will tell you a secret, Ogilvie. You know my cousin Janet—she is the kindest-hearted of all the women I know—and when I was coming away she gave me £2000 just in case I should need it——"

"£2000!" exclaimed Ogilvie. "Did she think you were going to buy Westminster Abbey during the course of your holidays?" And then he looked at the table before him; and a new idea seemed to strike him. "You don't mean to say, Macleod, that it is your cousin's money——"

Macleod's face flushed angrily. Had any other man made the suggestion, he would have received a tolerably sharp answer. But he only said to his old friend Ogilvie—

"No, no, Ogilvie; we are not very rich folks, but we have not come to that yet. 'I'd sell my kilt, I'd sell my shoon,' as the song says, before I touched a farthing of Janet's money. But I had to take it from her, so as not to offend her. It is wonderful, the anxiety and affection of women who live away out of the world like that. There was my mother, quite sure that something awful was going to happen to me, merely because I was going away for two or three months. And Janet—I suppose she knew that our family never was very good at saving money—she would have me take this little fortune of hers, just as if the old days were come back, and the son of the house was supposed to go to Paris to gamble away every penny——"

"By the way, Macleod," said Ogilvie, "you have never gone to Paris, as you intended."

"No," said he, trying to balance three nectarines one on the top of the other, "I have not gone to Paris. I have made enough friends in London. I have had plenty to occupy the time. And now, Ogilvie," he added brightly, "I am going in for my last frolic, before everybody has left London; and you must come to it, even if you have to go down by your cold-meat train again. You know Miss Rawlinson; you have seen her at Mrs. Ross's, no doubt. Very well, I met her first when we went down to the Thames yacht race, and afterwards we became great friends; and the dear little old lady already looks on me as if I were her son.

And do you know what her proposal is?—that she is to give me up her house and garden for a garden-party, and I am to ask my friends; and it is to be a dance as well, for we shall ask the people to have supper at eight o'clock or so; and then we shall have a marquee—and the garden all lighted up—do you see? It is one of the largest gardens on Campden Hill; and the coloured lamps hung on the trees will make it look very fine; and we shall have a band to play music for the dancers——"

"It will cost you £200 or £300, at least," said Ogilvie sharply.

"What then? You give your friends a pleasant evening, and you show them that you are not ungrateful," said Macleod.

Ogilvie began to ponder over this matter. The stories he had heard of Macleod's extravagant entertainments were true, then. Suddenly he looked up and said—

"Is Miss White to be one of your guests?"

"I hope so," said he. "The theatre will be closed at the end of this week."

"I suppose you have been a good many times to the theatre?"

"To the Piccadilly Theatre?"

"Yes."

"I have been only once to the Piccadilly Theatre—when you and I went together," said Macleod, coldly; and they spoke no more of that matter.

By and by they thought they might as well smoke outside; and so they went down and out upon the high and walled terrace overlooking the broad valley of the Thames. And now the moon had arisen in the south, and the winding river showed a pale grey among the black woods, and there was a silvery light on the stone parapet on which they leaned th arms. The night was mild, and soft, and clear; there was an intense silence around; but they heard the faint sound of oars far away—some boating party getting home through the dark shadows of the river-side trees.

"It is a beautiful life you have here in the south," Macleod said, after a time, "though I can imagine that the women enjoy it more than the men. It is natural for women to enjoy pretty colours and flowers, and bright lights and music; and I suppose

it is the mild air that lets their eyes grow so big and clear. But the men—I should think they must get tired of doing nothing. They are rather melancholy; and their hands are white. I wonder they don't begin to hate Hyde Park, and kid gloves, and tight boots. Ogilvie," said he, suddenly straightening himself up, "what do you say to the 12th? A few breathers over Ben-an-Sloich would put new lungs into you. I don't think you look quite so limp as most of the London men; but still you are not up to the mark. And then an occasional run out to Coll or Tiree in that old tub of ours, with a brisk sou'-wester blowing across—that would put some mettle into you. Mind you, you won't have any grand banquets at Castle Dare. I think it is hard on the poor old mother that she should have all the pinching, and none of the squandering; but women seem to have rather a liking for these sacrifices; and both she and Janet are very proud of the family name—I believe they would live on seaweed for a year if only their representative in London could take Buckingham Palace for the season. And Hamish—don't you remember Hamish? He will give you a hearty welcome to Dare; and he will tell you the truth about any salmon or stag you may kill—though he was never known to come within five pounds of the real weight of any big salmon I ever caught. Now then, what do you say?"

"Ah, it is all very well," said Lieutenant Ogilvie. "If we could all get what we want, there would scarcely be an officer in Aldershot Camp on the 12th of August. But I must say there are some capitally good fellows in our mess—and it isn't every one gets the chance you offer me—and there's none of your dog-in-the-manger feeling about them: in short, I do believe, Macleod, that I could get off for a week or so about the 20th."

"The 20th? So be it. Then you will have the black-cock added in."

"When do you leave?"

"On the 1st of August—the morning after my garden-party, You must come to it, Ogilvie. Lady Beauregard has persuaded her husband to put off their going to Ireland for three days in order to come. And I have got old Admiral Maitland coming —with his stories of the pressgang, and of Nelson, and of the

raids on the merchant-ships for officers for the navy. Did you know that Miss Rawlinson was an old sweetheart of his? He knew her when she lived in Jamaica with her father—several centuries ago, you would think, judging by their stories. Her father got £28,000 from the Government when his slaves were emancipated. I wish I could get the old Admiral up to Dare—he and the mother would have some stories to tell, I think. But you don't like long journeys at ninety-two."

He was in a pleasant and talkative humour, this bright-faced and stalwart young fellow, with his proud, fine features and his careless air. One could easily see how these old folks had made a sort of pet of him. But while he went on with his desultory chatting about the various people whom he had met, and the friendly invitations he had received, and the hopes he had formed of renewing his acquaintanceship with this person and the next person, should chance bring him again to London soon, he never once mentioned the name of Miss Gertrude White, or referred to her family, or even to her public appearances, about which there was plenty of talk at this time. Yet Lieutenant Ogilvie, on his rare visits to London, had more than once heard Sir Keith Macleod's name mentioned in conjunction with that of the young actress whom society was pleased to regard with a special and unusual favour just then; and once or twice he, as Macleod's friend, had been archly questioned on the subject by some inquisitive lady, whose eyes asked more than her words. But Lieutenant Ogilvie was gravely discreet. He neither treated the matter with ridicule nor, on the other hand, did he pretend to know more than he actually knew—which was literally nothing at all. For Macleod, who was, in ordinary circumstances, anything but a reserved or austere person, was on this subject strictly silent—evading questions with a proud and simple dignity that forbade the repetition of them. *"That which concerns you not, meddle not with"*: he observed the maxim himself, and expected others to do the like.

It was an early dinner they had had, after their stroll in Richmond Park; and it was a comparatively early train that Macleod and his friend now drove down to catch, after he had paid his bill. When they reached Waterloo Station it was not

yet eleven o'clock; when he, having bade good-bye to Ogilvie, got to his rooms in Bury Street, it was but a few minutes after. He was joyfully welcomed by his faithful friend, Oscar.

"You poor dog," said he, "here have we been enjoying ourselves all the day, and you have been in prison. Come, shall we go for a run?"

Oscar jumped up on him with a whine of delight; he knew what that taking up of the hat again meant. And then there was a silent stealing down-stairs; and a slight, pardonable bark of joy in the hall; and a wild dash into the freedom of the narrow street when the door was opened. Then Oscar moderated his transports, and kept pretty close to his master as together they began to wander through the desert wilds of London.

Piccadilly?—Oscar had grown as expert in avoiding the rattling broughams and hansoms as the veriest mongrel that ever led a vagrant life in London streets. Berkeley Square?—here there was comparative quiet, with the gas-lamps shining up on the thick foliage of the maples. In Grosvenor Square he had a bit of a scamper; but there was no rabbit to hunt. In Oxford Street his master took him into a public house and gave him a biscuit and a drink of water; after that his spirits rose a bit, and he began to range ahead in Baker Street. But did Oscar know any more than his master why they had taken this direction?

Still further north; and now there were a good many trees about; and the moon, high in the heavens, touched the trembling foliage, and shone white on the fronts of the houses. Oscar was a friendly companion; but he could not be expected to notice that his master glanced somewhat nervously along South Bank when he had reached the entrance to that thoroughfare. Apparently the place was quite deserted; there was nothing visible but the walls, trees, and houses, one side in black shadow, the other shining cold and pale in the moonlight. After a moment's hesitation Macleod resumed his walk—though he seemed to tread more softly.

And now, in the perfect silence, he neared a certain house, though but little of it was visible over the wall and through the trees. Did he expect to see a light in one of those upper windows,

which the drooping acacias did not altogether conceal? He walked quickly by, with his head averted. Oscar had got a good way in front, not doubting that his master was following him.

But Macleod, perhaps having mustered up further courage, stopped in his walk, and returned. This time he passed more slowly, and turned his head to the house, as if listening. There was no light in the windows; there was no sound at all; there was no motion but that of the trembling acacia-leaves as the cold wind of the night stirred them. And then he passed over to the south side of the thoroughfare; and stood in the black shadow of a high wall; and Oscar came, and looked up into his face.

A hansom rattled by; then there was utter stillness again; and the moonlight shone on the front of the small house, which was to all appearance as lifeless as the grave. Then, far away, twelve o'clock struck, and the sound in this intense quiet seemed distant as the sound of a bell at sea.

He was alone with the night, and with the dreams and fancies of the night. Would he, then, confess to himself that which he would confess to no other? Or was it merely some passing whim—some slight underchord of sentiment struck amid the careless joy of a young man's holiday—that had led him up into this silent region of trees and moonlight? The scene around him was romantic enough; but he certainly had not the features of an anguish-stricken lover.

Again the silence of the night was broken by the rumbling of wheels that came along the road; and now—whatever may have been the fancy that brought him hither—he turned to leave, and Oscar joyfully bounded out into the road. But this plain little brougham, instead of continuing its route, stopped at the gate of the house he had been watching, and two young ladies stepped out. Fionaghal, the Fair Stranger, had not, then, been wandering in the enchanted land of dreams, but toiling home from the scene of her anxious labours? He would have slunk away rapidly but for an untoward accident. Oscar, ranging up and down, came upon an old friend, and instantly made acquaintance with her, on seeing which Macleod, with deep vexation at his heart, but with a pleasant and careless face, had to walk along also.

"What an odd meeting!" said he. "I have been giving Oscar a run. I am glad to have a chance of bidding you good night. You are not very tired, I hope?"

"I am rather tired," said she, "but I have only two more nights, and then my holiday begins."

He shook hands with both sisters, and wished them good night and departed. As Miss Gertrude White went into her father's house, she seemed rather grave.

"Gerty," said the younger sister, as she screwed up the gas, "wouldn't the name of Lady Macleod look well in a play-bill?"

The elder sister would not answer; but as she turned away there was a quick flush of colour in her face—whether caused by anger or by a sudden revelation of her own thought it was impossible to say.

CHAPTER XI.

A FLOWER.

THE many friends Macleod had made in the south—or rather those of them who had remained in town till the end of the season—showed an unwonted interest in this nondescript party of his; and it was at a comparatively early hour in the evening that the various groups of people began to show themselves in Miss Rawlinson's garden. That prim old lady—with her quick, bright ways and her humorous little speeches—studiously kept herself in the background. It was Sir Keith Macleod who was the host. And when he remarked to her that he thought the most beautiful night of all the beautiful time he had spent in the south had been reserved for this very party, she replied—looking round the garden just as if she had been one of his guests—that it was a pretty scene. And it was a pretty scene. The last fire of the sunset was just touching the topmost branches of the trees. In the colder shade below, the banks and beds of flowers, and

the costumes of the ladies, acquired a strange intensity of colour. Then there was a band playing; and a good deal of chatting going on; and one old gentleman with a grizzled moustache humbly receiving lessons in lawn-tennis from an imperious small maiden of ten. Macleod was here, there, and everywhere. The Chinese lanterns outside were to be lit while the people were in at supper. Lieutenant Ogilvie was directed to take in Lady Beauregard when the time arrived.

"You must take her in yourself, Macleod," said that properly-constituted youth. "If you outrage the sacred laws of precedence"——

"I mean to take Miss Rawlinson in to supper," said Macleod; "she is the oldest woman here, and I think my best friend."

"I thought you might wish to give Miss White the place of honour," said Ogilvie out of sheer impertinence; but Macleod went off to order the candles to be lit in the marquee, where supper was laid.

By and by he came out again; and now the twilight had drawn on apace; there was a cold clear light in the skies, while at the same moment a red glow began to shine through the canvas of the long tent. He walked over to one little group who were seated on a garden-chair.

"Well," said he, "I have got pretty nearly all my people together now, Mrs. Ross."

"But where is Gertrude White?" said Mrs. Ross, "surely she is to be here?"

"Oh, yes, I think so," said he. "Her father and herself both promised to come. You know her holidays have begun now."

"It is a good thing for that girl," said Miss Rawlinson, in her quick, *staccato* fashion, "that she has few holidays. Very good thing that she has her work to mind. The way people run after her would turn any woman's head. The Grand Duke —— is said to have declared that she was one of the three prettiest women that he saw in England: what can you expect if things like that get to a girl's ear?"

"But you know Gerty is quite unspoiled," said Mrs. Ross, [illegible]y.



"Yes; so far," said the old lady, "so far, she retains the courtesy of being hypocritical"——

"Oh, Miss Rawlinson! I won't have you say such things of Gerty White!" Mrs. Ross protested. "You are a wicked old woman—isn't she, Hugh?"

"I am saying it to her credit," continued the old lady, with much composure. "What I say is, that most pretty women who are much run after are flattered into frankness. When they are introduced to you, they don't take the trouble to conceal that they are quite indifferent to you. A plain woman will be decently civil, and will smile, and pretend she is pleased, and talk. A beauty—a recognised beauty—doesn't take the trouble to be hypocritical. Now Miss White does."

"It is an odd sort of compliment," said Colonel Ross, laughing. "What do you think of it, Macleod?"

"These are too great refinements for my comprehension," said he, modestly. "I think if a pretty woman is uncivil to you, it is easy for you to turn on your heel and go away."

"I do not say uncivil. Don't you go misrepresenting a poor old woman, Sir Keith. I said she is most likely to be flattered into being honest—into showing a stranger that she is quite indifferent, whereas a plain woman will try to make herself a little agreeable. Now a poor lone creature like myself likes to fancy that people are glad to see her; and Miss White pretends as much. It is very kind. By and by she will get spoiled like the rest; and then she will become honest. She will shake hands with me, and then turn off, as much as to say, 'Go away, you ugly old woman, for I can't be bothered with you, and I don't expect any money from you, and why should I pretend to like you?'"

All this was said in a half-jesting way; and it certainly did not at all represent—so far as Macleod had ever made out—the real opinions of her neighbours in the world held by this really kind and gentle old lady. But Macleod had noticed before that Miss Rawlinson never spoke with any great warmth about Miss Gertrude White's beauty, or her acting, or anything at all connected with her. At this very moment when she was apparently praising the young lady, there was a bitter flavour

about what she said. There may be jealousy between sixty-five and nineteen; and if this reflection occurred to Macleod, he no doubt assumed that Miss Rawlinson, if jealous at all, was jealous of Miss Gertrude White's influence over—Mrs. Ross.

"As for Miss White's father," continued the old lady, with a little laugh, "perhaps he believes in those sublime theories of art he is always preaching about. Perhaps he does. They are very fine. One result of them is that his daughter remains on the stage—and earns a handsome income—and he enjoys himself in picking up bits of curiosities"——

"Now that is really unfair," said Mrs. Ross, seriously. "Mr. White is not a rich man, but he has some small means that render him quite independent of any income of his daughter's. Why, how did they live before they ever thought of letting her try her fortune on the stage? And the money he spent, when it was at last decided she should be carefully taught"——

"Oh, very well!" said Miss Rawlinson, with a smile, but she nodded her head ominously. If that old man was not actually living on his daughter's earnings, he had at least strangled his mother, or robbed the Bank of England, or done something or other. Miss Rawlinson was obviously not well disposed either to Mr. White or to his daughter.

At this very moment both these persons made their appearance, and certainly, as this slender and graceful figure, clad in a pale summer costume, came across the lawn, and as a smile of recognition lit up the intelligent fine face, those critics sitting there must have acknowledged that Gertrude White was a singularly pretty woman. And then the fascination of that low-toned voice! She began to explain to Macleod why they were so late. Some trifling accident had happened to Carry. But, as the simple, pathetic tones told him the story, his heart was filled with a great gentleness and pity towards that poor victim of misfortune. He was struck with remorse because he had sometimes thought harshly of the poor child, on account of a mere occasional bit of pertness. His first message from the highlands would be to her.

"*O Willie brewed a peck o' maut*" the band played merrily as the gay company took their seats at the long banquet-table,

Macleod leading in the prim old dame who had placed her house at his disposal. There was a blaze of light and colour in this spacious marquee. Bands of scarlet cloth took the place of oaken rafters; there were huge blocks of ice on the table, each set in a miniature lake that was filled with white water-lilies; there were masses of flowers and fruits from one end to the other; and by the side of each *menu* lay a tiny nosegay, in the centre of which was a sprig of bell-heather. This last was a notion of Macleod's amiable hostess; she had made up these miniature bouquets herself. But she had been forestalled in the pretty compliment. Macleod had not seen much of Miss Gertrude White in the cold twilight outside. Now, in this blaze of yellow light, he turned his eyes to her, as she sat there demurely flirting with an old admiral of ninety-two, who was one of Macleod's special friends. And what was that flower she wore in her bosom—the sole piece of colour in the costume of white? That was no sprig of blood-red bell-heather, but a bit of real heather—of the common ling; and it was set amid a few leaves of juniper. Now the juniper is the badge of the Clan Macleod. She wore it next her heart.

There was laughter, and wine, and merry talking. "*Last May a braw wooer*" the band played now; but they scarcely listened.

"Where is your piper, Sir Keith?" said Lady Beauregard.

"At this moment," said he, "I should not wonder if he was down at the shore, waiting for me."

"You are going away quite soon then?"

"To-morrow. But I don't wish to speak of it. I should like to-night to last for ever."

Lady Beauregard was interrupted by her neighbour.

"What has pleased you, then, so much?" said his hostess, looking up at him. "London? Or the people in it? Or any one person in it?"

"Oh!" he said laughingly, "the whole thing. What is the use of dissecting? It is nothing but holiday-making in this place. Now, Miss Rawlinson, are you brave? Won't you challenge the admiral to drink a glass of wine with you? And you must include his companion—just as they do at the city dinners—and I will join too."

And so these old sweethearts drank to each other. And Macleod raised his glass, too; and Miss White lowered her eyes, and perhaps flushed a little as she touched hers with her lips; for she had not often been asked to take a part in this old-fashioned ceremony. But that was not the only custom they revived that evening. After the banquet was over; and the ladies had got some light shawls and gone out into the mild summer night; and when the long marquee was cleared, and the band installed at the farther end; then there was a murmured talk of a minuet. Who could dance it? Should they try it?

"You know it?" said Macleod to Miss White.

"Yes," said she, looking down.

"Will you be my partner?"

"With pleasure," she answered, but there was some little surprise in her voice, which he at once detected.

"Oh," said he, "the mother taught me when I was a child. She and I used to have grand dances together. And Hamish, he taught me the sword-dance."

"Do you know the sword-dance?" she said.

"Any one can know it," said he, "it is more difficult to do it. But at one time I could dance it with four of the thickest-handled dirks instead of the two swords."

"I hope you will show us your skill to-night," she said, with a smile.

"Do you think any one can dance the sword-dance without the pipes?" said he, quite simply.

And now some of the younger people had made bold to try this minuet; and Macleod led his partner up to the head of the improvised ball-room; and the slow and graceful music began. That was a pretty sight for those walking outside in the garden. So warm was the night that the canvas of one side of the marquee had been removed; and those walking about in the dark outside could look into this gaily-lighted place with the beautifully-coloured figures moving to the slow music. And as they thus walked along the gravel-paths, or under the trees, the stems of which were decorated with spirals of coloured lamps, a new light arose in the south to shed a further magic over the scene. Almost red at first, the full moon cleared as it rose, until the trees

and bushes were touched with a silver radiance, and the few people who walked about threw black shadows on the greensward and gravel. In an arbour at the furthest end of the garden a number of Chinese lanterns shed a dim coloured light on a table and a few rocking-chairs. There were cigarettes on the table.

By and by, from out of the brilliancy of the tent, stepped Macleod and Fionaghal herself, she leaning on his arm, a light scarf thrown round her neck. She uttered a slight cry of surprise when she saw the picture this garden presented—the coloured cups on the trees, the swinging lanterns, the broader sheen of the moonlight spreading over the foliage, and the lawn, and the walks.

"It is like fairy-land!" she said.

They walked along the winding gravel-paths; and now that some familiar quadrille was being danced in that brilliant tent, there were fewer people out here in the moonlight.

"I should begin to believe that romance was possible," she said, with a smile, "if I often saw a beautiful scene like this. It is what we try to get into theatre; but I see all the bare boards and the limelight—I don't have a chance of believing in it."

"Do you have a chance of believing in anything," said he, "on the stage?"

"I don't understand you," she said, gently; for she was sure he would not mean the rudeness that his words literally conveyed.

"And perhaps I cannot explain," said he. "But—but your father was talking the other day about your giving yourself up altogether to your art—living the lives of other people for the time being—forgetting yourself—sacrificing yourself—having no life of your own but that. What must the end of it be?—that you play with emotions and beliefs until you have no faith in any one—none left for yourself—it is only the material of your art. Would you not rather like to live your own life?"

He had spoken rather hesitatingly; and he was not at all sure that he had quite conveyed to her his meaning—though he had thought over the subject long enough and often enough to get his own impressions of it clear.

At another time, and in a more critical mood, she might have

said to herself, "*This man hates the stage because he is jealous of its hold on my life,*" and might have rejoiced over the inadvertent confession. But just at this moment these hesitating words of his seemed to have awakened some quick responsive thrill in her nature, for she suddenly said, with an earnestness that was not at all assumed—

"Sometimes I have thought of that—it is so strange to hear my own doubts repeated. If I could choose my own life—yes, I would rather live that out than merely imagining the experiences of others. But what is one to do? You look around, and take the world as it is. Can anything be more trivial and disappointing? When you are Juliet in the balcony, or Rosalind in the forest, then you have some better feeling within you, if it is only for an hour or so."

"Yes," said he, "and you go on indulging in those doses of fictitious sentiment until—— But I am afraid the night air is too cold for you. Shall we go back?"

She could not fail to notice the trace of bitterness, and subsequent coldness, with which he spoke. She knew that he must have been thinking deeply over this matter; and that it was no ordinary thing that caused him to speak with so much feeling. But of course, when he proposed that they should return to the marquee, she consented. He could not expect her to stand there and defend her whole manner of life. Much less could he expect her to give up her profession merely because he had exercised his wits in getting up some fantastic theory about it. And she began to think that he had no right to talk to her in this bitter fashion.

When they had got half way back to the tent, he paused for a moment.

"I am going to ask a favour of you," he said in a low voice. "I have spent a pleasant time in England, and I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for letting me become one of your friends. To-morrow morning I am going back home. I should like you to give me that flower—as some little token of remembrance."

The small fingers did not tremble at all as she took the flower from her dress. She presented it to him with a charming smile,

and without a word. What was the giving of a flower? There was a cart-load of roses in the tent.

But this flower she had worn next her heart.

CHAPTER XII.

WHITE HEATHER.

AND now, behold! the red flag flying from the summit of Castle Dare—a spot of brilliant colour in this world of whirling mist and flashing sunlight. For there is half a gale blowing in from the Atlantic; and gusty clouds come sweeping over the islands, so that now the Dutchman, and now Lunga, and now Colonsay disappears from sight, and then emerges into the sunlight again, dripping and shining after the bath; while ever and anon the huge promontory of Ru-Treshanish shows a gloomy purple far in the north. But the wind and the weather may do what they like to-day: for has not the word just come down from the hill that the smoke of the steamer has been made out in the south? and old Hamish is flying this way and that, fairly at his wits' end with excitement; and Janet Macleod has cast a last look at the decorations of heather and juniper in the great hall; while Lady Macleod, dressed in the most stately fashion, has declared that she is as able as the youngest of them to walk down to the point to welcome home her son.

"Ay, your leddyship, it is very bad," complains the distracted Hamish, "that it will be so rough a day this day, and Sir Keith not to come ashore in his own gig, but in a fishing-boat, and to come ashore at the fishing-quay, too! but it is his own men will go out for him, and not the fishermen at all, though I am sure they will hef a dram whatever, when Sir Keith comes ashore. And will you not tek the pony, your leddyship? for it is a long road to the quay."

"No, I will not take the pony, Hamish," said the tall white-haired dame; "and it is not of much consequence what boat Sir Keith has, so long as he comes back to us. And now I think you had better go down to the quay yourself, and see that the cart is waiting and the boat ready."

But how could old Hamish go down to the quay? He was in his own person skipper, head-keeper, steward, butler, and general major-domo, and ought on such a day to be in half-a-dozen places at once. From the earliest morning he had been hurrying hither and thither, in his impatience making use of much voluble Gaelic. He had seen the yacht's crew in their new jerseys. He had been round the kennels. He had got out a couple of bottles of the best claret that Castle Dare could afford. He had his master's letters arranged on the library-table; and had given a final rub to the guns and rifles on the rack. He had even been down to the quay, swearing at the salmon-fishers for having so much lumber lying about the place where Sir Keith Macleod was to land. And if he was to go down to the quay now, how could he be sure that the ancient Christina, who was mistress of the kitchen as far as her husband Hamish would allow her to be, would remember all his instructions? And then the little grand-daughter, Christina—would she remember her part in the ceremony?

However, as Hamish could not be in six places at once, he at length decided to obey his mistress's directions, and went hurriedly off to the quay, overtaking on his way Donald the piper-lad, who was apparelled in all his professional finery.

"And if ever you put wind in your pipes, you will put wind in your pipes this day, Donald," said he to the red-haired lad. "And I will tell you now what you will play when you come ashore from the steamer—it is the *Farewell to Chubralter* you will play."

"The *Farewell to Gibralter!*" said Donald peevishly, for he was bound in honour to let no man interfere with his proper business. "It is a better march than that I will play, Hamish. It is the *Heights of Alma*, that was made by Mr. Ross, the Queen's [illegible]er; and will you tell me that the *Heights of Alma* i[illegible]ter march than the *Farewell to Gibralter?*"

Hamish pretended to pay no heed to this impertinent boy. His eye was fixed on a distant black speck that was becoming more and more pronounced out there amid the greys and greens of the windy and sunlit sea. Occasionally it disappeared altogether, as a cloud of rain swept across towards the giant cliffs of Mull; and then again it would appear, sharper and blacker than ever, while the masts and funnel were now visible as well as the hull. When Donald and his companion got down to the quay, they found the men already in the big boat, getting ready to hoist the huge brown lug-sail; and there was a good deal of laughing and talking going on, perhaps in anticipation of the dram they were sure to get when their master returned to Castle Dare. Donald jumped down on the rude stone ballast, and made his way up to the bow; Hamish, who remained on shore, helped to shove her off; then the heavy lug-sail was quickly hoisted, the sheet hauled tight, and presently the broad-beamed boat was ploughing its way through the rushing sea, with an occasional cloud of spray coming right over her from stem to stern. "*Fhir a bhata,*" the men sung; until Donald struck in with his pipes, and the wild skirl of *The Barren Rocks of Aden* was a fitter sort of music to go with these sweeping winds and plunging seas.

And now we will board the steamer, where Keith Macleod is up on the bridge, occasionally using a glass, and again talking to the captain, who is beside him. First of all on board he had caught sight of the red flag floating over Castle Dare; and his heart had leaped up at that sign of welcome. Then he could make out the dark figures on the quay; and the hoisting of the lug-sail; and the putting off of the boat. It was not a good day for observing things; for heavy clouds were quickly passing over, followed by bewildering gleams of a sort of watery sunlight; but, as it happened, one of these sudden flashes chanced to light up a small plateau on the side of the hill above the quay, just as the glass was directed on that point. Surely—surely—those two figures?

"Why, it is the mother—and Janet!" he cried.

He hastily gave the glass to his companion.

"Look!" said he. "Don't you think that is Lady Macleod

and my cousin? What could have tempted the old lady to come away down there on such a squally day?"

"Oh yes, I think it is the ladies," said the captain; and then he added, with a friendly smile, "and I think it is to see you all the sooner, Sir Keith, that they have come down to the shore."

"Then," said he, "I must go down and get my gillie, and show him his future home."

He went below the hurricane-deck to a corner in which Oscar was chained up. Beside the dog, sitting on a camp-stool and wrapped round with a tartan plaid, was the person whom Macleod had doubtless referred to as his gillie. He was not a distinguished-looking attendant to be travelling with a Highland chieftain.

"Johnny, my man, come on deck now, and I will show you where you are going to live. You're all right, now, aren't you? And you will be on the solid land again in about ten minutes."

Macleod's gillie rose—or rather, got down—from the camp-stool, and showed himself to be a miserable, emaciated child of ten or eleven, with a perfectly colourless face, frightened grey eyes, and starved white hands. The contrast between the bronzed and bearded sailors—who were now hurrying about to receive the boat from Dare — and this pallid and shrunken scrap of humanity was striking; and when Macleod took his hand, and half led and half carried him up on deck, the look of terror that he directed on the plunging waters all around showed that he had not had much experience of the sea. Involuntarily he had grasped hold of Macleod's coat as if for protection.

"Now, Johnny, look right ahead. Do you see the big house on the cliffs over yonder?"

The child, still clinging on to his protector, looked all round with the dull, pale eyes, and at length said—

"No."

"Can't you see that house, poor chap? Well, do you see that boat over there? You must be able to see that."

"Yes, sir."

"That boat is to take you ashore. You needn't be afraid. If you don't like to look at the sea get down into the bottom of

the boat, and take Oscar with you; and you'll see nothing until you are ashore. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Come along, then."

For now the wild skirl of Donald's pipes was plainly audible; and the various packages—the new rifle, the wooden case containing the wonderful dresses for Lady Macleod and her niece, and what not—were all arranged ready; to say nothing of some loaves of white bread that the steward was sending ashore at Hamish's request. And then the heaving boat came closer to, her sail was hauled down, and a rope thrown and caught; and then there was a hazardous scrambling down the dripping iron steps, and a notable spring on the part of Oscar, who had escaped from the hands of the sailors. As for the new gillie, he resembled nothing so much as a limp bunch of clothes as Macleod's men, wondering not a little, caught him up and passed him astern. Then the rope was thrown off, the steamer steamed slowly ahead, the lug-sail was run up again, and away the boat plunged, with Donald playing the *Heights of Alma* as though he would rend the skies.

"Hold your noise, Donald!" his master called to him, laughing. "You will have plenty of time to play the pipes in the evening."

For he was greatly delighted to be among his own people again; and he was eager in his questions of the men as to all that had happened in his absence; and it was no small thing to them that Sir Keith Macleod should remember their affairs too, and ask after their families and friends. Donald's loyalty was stronger than his professional pride. He was not offended that he had been silenced; he only bottled up his musical fervour all the more; and at length, as he neared the land, and knew that Lady Macleod and Miss Macleod were within hearing, he took it that he knew better than any one else what was proper to the occasion, and once more the proud and stirring march strove with the sound of the hurrying waves. Nor was that all. The piper-lad was doing his best. Never before had he put such fire into his work; but as they got close in shore the joy in his heart got altogether the mastery of him, and away he broke into the mad delight of *Lady Mary Ramsay's Reel*. Hamish on the quay

heard, and he strutted about as if he were himself playing, and that before the Queen. And then he heard another sound—that of Macleod's voice.

"*Stand by, lads! . . . Down with her!*"—and the flapping sail, with its swinging yard, rattled down into the boat. At the same moment Oscar made a clean spring into the water, gained the landing-steps, and dashed upwards—dripping as he was—to two ladies who were standing on the quay above. And Janet Macleod so far forgot what was due to her best gown that she caught his head in her arms, as he pawed and whined with delight.

That was a glad enough party that started off and up the hill-side for Castle Dare. Janet Macleod did not care to conceal that she had been crying a little bit; and there were proud tears in the eyes of the stately old dame who walked with her; but the most excited of all was Hamish, who could by no means be got to understand that his master did not all at once want to hear about the trial of the young setters, and the price of the sheep sold the week before at Tobermory, and the stag that was chased by the Carsaig men on Tuesday.

"Confound it! Hamish," Macleod said, laughing, "leave all those things till after dinner."

"Oh ay, oh ay, Sir Keith, we will hef plenty of time after dinner," said Hamish, just as if he were one of the party, but very nervously working with the ends of his thumbs all the time; "and I will tell you of the fine big stag that has been coming down every night—every night, as I am a living man—to Mrs. Murdoch's corn; and I wass saying to her, 'Just hold your tongue, Mrs Murdoch,' that wass what I will say to her, 'just hold your tongue, Mrs. Murdoch, and be a civil woman, for a day or two days, and when Sir Keith comes home, it iss no more at ahl the stag will trouble you—oh no, no more at ahl—there will be no more trouble about the stag when Sir Keith comes home.'"

And old Hamish laughed at his own wit—but it was in a sort of excited way.

"Look here, Hamish—I want you to do this for me," Macleod said; and instantly the face of the old man—it was a fine face, too, with its aquiline nose, and grizzled hair, and keen hawk-like

eyes—was full of an eager attention. "Go back and fetch that little boy I left with Donald. You had better look after him yourself. I don't think any water came over him; but give him dry clothes if he is wet at all. And feed him up; the little beggar will take a lot of fattening without any harm."

"Where is he to go?" said Hamish, doubtfully.

"You are to make a keeper of him. When you have fattened him up a bit, teach him to feed the dogs. When he gets bigger, he can clean the guns."

"I will let no man or boy clean the guns for you but myself, Sir Keith," the old man said, quite simply, and without a shadow of disrespect. "I will hef no risk of the kind."

"Very well, then; but go and get the boy, and make him at home as much as you can. Feed him up."

"Who is it, Keith," his cousin said, "that you are speaking of as if he was a sheep or a calf?"

"Faith," said he, laughing, "if the philanthropists heard of it, they would prosecute me for slave-stealing. I bought the boy—for a sovereign."

"I think you have made a bad bargain, Keith," his mother said; but she was quite prepared to hear of some absurd whim of his.

"Well," said he, "I was going into Trafalgar Square, where the National Gallery of pictures is, mother, and there is a cab-stand in the street, and there was a cabman standing there, munching at a lump of dry bread, that he cut with a jack-knife. I never saw a cabman do that before; I should have been less surprised if he had been having a chicken and a bottle of port. However, in front of the big cabman, this little chap I have brought with me was standing; quite in rags; no shoes on his feet; no cap on his wild hair; and he was looking fixedly at the big lump of bread. I never saw any animal look so starved and so hungry; his eyes were quite glazed with the fascination of seeing the man ploughing away at this lump of loaf. And I never saw any child so thin. His hands were like the claws of a bird; and his trousers were short and torn, so that you could see his legs were like two pipe-stems. At last the cabman saw him. Get out o' the way,' says he. The little chap slunk off, frightened,

I suppose. Then the man changed his mind. 'Come here,' says he. But the little chap was frightened, and wouldn't come back; so he went after him, and thrust the loaf into his hand, and bade him be off. I can tell you the way he went into that loaf was very fine to see. It was like a weasel at the neck of a rabbit; it was like an otter at the back of a salmon. And that was how I made his acquaintance," Macleod added carelessly.

"But you have not told us why you brought him up here," his mother said.

"Oh," said he, with a sort of laugh, "I was looking at him, and I wondered whether Highland mutton and Highland air would make any difference in the wretched little skeleton; and so I made his acquaintance. I went home with him to a fearful place—I have got the address, but I did not know there were such quarters in London—and I saw his mother. The poor woman was very ill; and she had a lot of children; and she seemed quite glad when I offered to take this one and make a herd or a gamekeeper of him. I promised he should go to visit her once a year, that she might see whether there was any difference. And I gave her a sovereign."

"You were quite right, Keith," his cousin said gravely; "you run a great risk. Do they hang slavers?"

"Mother," said he, for by this time the ladies were standing still, so that Hamish and the new gillie should overtake them," you mustn't laugh at the little chap when you see him with the plaid taken off. The fact is, I took him to a shop in the neighbourhood to get some clothes for him, but I couldn't get anything small enough. He *does* look ridiculous; but you mustn't laugh at him, for he is like a girl for sensitiveness. But when he has been fed up a bit, and got some Highland air into his lungs, his own mother won't know him. And you will get him some other clothes, Janet—a kilt maybe—when his legs get stronger."

Whatever Keith Macleod did was sure to be right in his mother's eyes; and she only said, with a laugh—

"Well, Keith, you are not like your brothers. When they brought me home presents, it was pretty things; but all your curiosities, wherever you go, are the halt and the lame and the

blind, so that the people laugh at you and say that Castle Dare is becoming the hospital of Mull."

"Mother, I don't care what the people say."

"And indeed I know that," she answered.

Their waiting had allowed Hamish and the new gillie to overtake them, and certainly the latter—deprived of his plaid—presented a sufficiently ridiculous appearance in the trousers and jacket that were obviously too big for him. But neither Lady Macleod nor Janet laughed at all when they saw this starved London waif before them.

"Johnny," said Macleod, "here are two ladies who will be very kind to you, so you needn't be afraid to live here."

But Johnny did look mortally afraid, and instinctively once more took hold of Macleod's coat. Then he seemed to have some notion of his duty. He drew back one foot, and made a sort of curtsy. Probably he had seen girls do this, in mock-heroic fashion, in some London court.

"And are you very tired?" said Janet Macleod, in that soft voice of hers that all children loved.

"Yes," said the child.

"Kott bless me!" cried Hamish, "I did not know that!"—and therewith the old man caught up Johnny Wickes as if he had been a bit of ribbon, and flung him on to his shoulder, and marched off to Castle Dare.

Then the three Macleods continued on their way—through the damp-smelling fir-wood; over the bridge that spanned the brawling brook; again through the fir-wood; until they reached the open space surrounding the big stone house. They stood for a minute there—high over the great plain of the sea, that was beautiful with a thousand tints of light. And there was the green island of Ulva, and there the darker rocks of Colonsay, and farther out, amid the windy vapour and sunlight, Lunga, and Fladda, and the Dutchman's Cap, changing in their hue every minute as the clouds came driving over the sea.

"Mother," said he, "I have not tasted fresh air since I left. I am not sorry to get back to Dare."

"And I don't think we are sorry to see you back, Keith," his cousin said modestly.

And yet the manner of his welcome was not imposing; they are not very good at grand ceremonies on the western shores of Mull. It is true that Donald, relieved of the care of Johnny Wickes, had sped by a short-cut through the fir-wood, and was now standing in the gravelled space outside the house, playing the *Heights of Alma* with a spirit worthy of all the Mac Cruimins that ever lived. But as for the ceremony of welcome, this was all there was of it. When Keith Macleod went up to the hall-door, he found a small girl of five or six standing quite by herself at the open entrance. This was Christina, the grand-daughter of Hamish, a pretty little girl with wide blue eyes and yellow hair.

"Hallo, Christina," said Macleod, "won't you let me into the house?"

"This is for you, Sir Keith," said she in the Gaelic, and she presented him with a beautiful bunch of white heather. Now white heather, in that part of the country, is known to bring great good fortune to the possessor of it.

"And it is a good omen," said he, lightly, as he took the child up and kissed her. And that was the manner of his welcome to Castle Dare.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT HOME.

The two women-folk with whom he was most nearly brought into contact were quite convinced that his stay in London had in no wise altered the buoyant humour and brisk activity of Keith Macleod. Castle Dare awoke into a new life on his return. He was all about and over the place, accompanied by the faithful Hamish; and he had a friendly word and smile for every one he met. He was a good master: perhaps he was none the less liked because it was pretty well understood that he meant



MACLEOD'S RETURN.

to be master. His good-nature had nothing of weakness in it. "If you love me, I love you," says the Gaelic proverb; "*otherwise do not come near me.*" There was not a man or lad about the place who would not have adventured his life for Macleod; but all the same they were well aware that the handsome young master, who seemed to go through life with a merry laugh on his face, was not one to be trifled with. This John Fraser, an Aberdeen man, discovered on the second night after Macleod's return to Castle Dare.

Macleod had the salmon-fishing on this part of the coast, and had a boat's crew of four men engaged in the work. One of these having fallen sick, Hamish had to hire a new hand, an Aberdeenshire man, who joined the crew just before Macleod's departure from London. This Fraser turned out to be a "dour" man; and his discontent and grumbling seemed to be affecting the others, so that the domestic peace of Dare was threatened. On the night in question, old Hamish came into Macleod's conjoint library and gun-room.

"The fishermen hef been asking me again, sir," observed Hamish, with his cap in his hand. "What will I say to them?"

"Oh, about the wages?" Macleod said, turning round.

"Ay, sir."

"Well, Hamish, I don't object. Tell them that what they say is right. This year has been a very good year; we have made some money; I will give them the two shillings a week more if they like. But then, look here, Hamish: if they have their wages raised in a good year, they must have them lowered in a bad year. They cannot expect to share the profit without sharing the loss too. Do you understand that, Hamish?"

"Yes, Sir Keith, I think I do."

"Do you think you could put it into good Gaelic for them?"

"Oh ay."

"Then tell them to choose for themselves. But make it clear."

"Ay, Sir Keith," said Hamish; "and if it was not for that —— man, John Fraser, there would be no word of this thing at ahl. And there is another thing I will hef to speak to you about, Sir Keith; and it is John Fraser, too, who is at the bottom of this, I will know that fine. It is more than two or

three times you will warn the men not to bathe in the bay below the Castle; and not for many a day will any one do that, for the Cave bay, it is not more as half a mile away. And when you were in London, Sir Keith, it was this man John Fraser, he would bathe in the bay below the Castle in the morning, and he got one or two of the others to join him; and when I bade him go away, he will say that the sea belongs to no man. And this morning, too——"

"This morning!" Macleod said, jumping to his feet. There was an angry flash in his eyes.

"Ay, sir, this very morning I saw two of them myself—and John Fraser he was one of them—and I went down and said to them, 'It will be a bad day for you,' says I to them, 'if Sir Keith will find you in this bay.'"

"Are they down at the quay now?" Macleod said.

"Ay, they will be in the house now."

"Come along with me, Hamish. I think we will put this right."

He lifted his cap and went out into the cool night air, followed by Hamish. They passed through the dark fir-wood until they came in sight of the Atlantic again, which was smooth enough to show the troubled reflection of the bigger stars. They went down the hill-side until they were close to the shore; and then they followed the rough path to the quay. The door of the square stone building was open; the men were seated on rude stools or on spare coils of rope, smoking. Macleod called them out, and they came to the door.

"Now look here, lads," said he: "you know I will not allow any man to bathe in the bay before the house. I told you before; I tell you now for the last time. They that want to bathe can go along to the Cave bay; and the end of it is this—and there will be no more words about it—that the first man I catch in the bay before the house, I will take a horsewhip to him, and he will have as good a run as ever he had in his life!"

With that he was turning away, when he heard one of the men mutter, "*I would like to see you do it.*" He wheeled round instantly—and if some of his London friends could have seen the look of his face at this moment, they might have altered

their opinion about the obliteration of certain qualities from the temperament of the Highlanders of our own day.

"Who said that?" he exclaimed.

There was no answer.

"Come out here, you four men!" he said. "Stand in a line there. Now let the man who said that step out and face me. I will show him whc is to be master here. If he thinks he can master me, well but it is one or the other of us who will be master!"

There was not a sound or a motion; but Macleod suddenly sprang forward, caught the man Fraser by the throat, and shook him thrice—as he might have shaken a reed.

"You scoundrel!" he said; "you coward!—are you afraid to own it was you? There has been nothing but bad feeling since ever you brought your ugly face among us—well, we've had enough of you!"

He flung him back.

"Hamish," said he, "you will pay this man his month's wages to-night. Pack him off with the Gometra men in the morning; they will take him out to the *Pioneer*. And look you here, sir," he added, turning to Fraser, "it will be a bad day for you the day that I see your face again anywhere about Castle Dare."

He walked off and up to the house again, followed by the reluctant Hamish. Hamish had spoken of this matter only that Macleod should give the men a renewed warning; he had no notion that this act of vengeance would be the result. And where were they to get a man to put in Fraser's place?

It was about an hour later that Hamish again came into the room.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said he, "but the men are outside."

"I cannot see them."

"They are ferry sorry, sir, about the whole matter, and there will be no more bathing in the front of the house, and the man Fraser they hef brought him up to say he is ferry sorry too."

"They have brought him up?"

"Ay, sir," said Hamish with a grave smile. "It wass for fighting him they were, one after the other, because he will make a bad speech to you; and he could not fight three men, one after

the other; and so they hef made him come up to say he is ferry sorry too; and will you let him stay on to the end of the season?"

"No. Tell the men that if they will behave themselves, we can go on as we did before, in peace and friendliness; but I mean to be master in this place. And I will not have a sulky fellow like this Fraser stirring up quarrels. He must pack and be off."

"It will not be easy to get another man, Sir Keith," old Hamish ventured to say.

"Get Dougal Black or Coll Black over from Ulva; or you can bring Duncan from the yacht, surely?"

"But you will want the yacht, sir, when Mr. Ogilvie comes to Dare?"

"I tell you, Hamish, that I will not have that fellow about the place—that is an end of it. Did you think it was only a threat that I meant? And have you not heard the old saying that 'one does not apply plaster to a threat'? You will send him to Gometra in the morning in time for the boat."

And so the sentence of banishment was confirmed; and Hamish got one of the numerous Blacks of Ulva to take the place of Fraser; and from that time to the end of the fishing season perfect peace and harmony prevailed between master and men.

But if Lady Macleod and Janet saw no change whatever in Macleod's manner after his return from the south, Hamish, who was more alone with the young man, did. Why this strange indifference to the very occupations that used to be the chief interest of his life? He would not go out after the deer: the velvet would be on their horns yet. He would not go out after the grouse: what was the use of disturbing them before Mr. Ogilvie came up?

"I am in no hurry," he said, almost petulantly. "Shall I not have to be here the whole winter for the shooting?"—and Hamish was amazed to hear him talk of the winter shooting as some compulsory duty, whereas in these parts it far exceeds in variety and interest the very limited low-ground shooting of the autumn. Until young Ogilvie came up, Macleod never had a

gun in his hand. He had gone fishing two or three days; but had generally ended by surrendering his rod to Hamish, and going for a walk up the glen, alone. The only thing he seemed to care about, in the way of out-of-door occupation, was the procuring of otter-skins; every man and boy in his service was ordered to keep a sharp look-out on that stormy coast for the prince of fur-bearing animals. Years before he had got enough skins together for a jacket for his cousin Janet; and that garment of beautiful, thick, black fur—dyed black, of course—was as silken and rich as when it was made. Why should he forget his own theory of letting all animals have a chance in urging a war of extermination against the otter?

This pre-occupation of mind, of which Hamish was alone observant, was nearly inflicting a cruel injury on Hamish himself. On the morning of the day on which Norman Ogilvie was expected to arrive, Hamish went into his master's library. Macleod had been reading a book; but he had pushed it aside; and now both his elbows were on the table, and he was leaning his head on his hands, apparently in deep meditation of some kind or other.

"Will I tek the bandage off Nell's foot now, sir?"

"Oh, yes, if you like. You know as much as I do about it."

"Oh, I am quite sure," said Hamish brightly, "that she will be ahl quite well to-morrow. I will tek her whateffer; and I can send her home if it is too much for her."

Macleod took up his book again.

"Very well, Hamish. But you have plenty to do about the house. Duncan and Sandy can go with us to-morrow."

The old man started, and looked at his master for a second. Then he said, "Whateffer is your will, sir," in a low voice, and left the room.

But for the hurt, and the wounded, and the sorrowful, there was always one refuge of consolation in Castle Dare. Hamish went straight to Janet Macleod; and she was astonished to see the emotion of which the keen, hard, handsome face of the old man was capable. Who before had ever seen tears in the eyes of Hamish MacIntyre?

"And perhaps it is so," said Hamish, with his head hanging

down, "and perhaps it is that I am an old man now, and not able any more to go up to the hills; but if I am not able for that, I am not able for anything; and I will not ask Sir Keith to keep me about the house or about the yacht. It is younger men will do better as me; and I can go away to Greenock; and if it is an old man I am, maybe I will find a place in a smack, for all that——"

"Oh nonsense, Hamish," Janet Macleod said, with her kindly eyes bent on him. "You may be sure Sir Keith did not mean anything like that——"

"Ay, mem," said the old man proudly, "and who wass it that first put a gun into his hand; and who wass it skinned the ferry first seal that he shot in Loch Scridain; and who wass it told him the name of every spar and sheet of the *Umpire*, and showed him how to hold a tiller? And if there is any man knows more as me about the birds, and the deer, that is right—let him go out; but it is the first day I hef not been out with Sir Keith since ever I wass at Castle Dare; and now it iss time that I am going away; for I am an old man, and the younger men they will be better on the hills and in the yacht too. But I can make my living whatever."

"Hamish, you are speaking like a foolish man," said Janet Macleod to him. "You will wait here now till I go to Sir Keith."

She went to him.

"Keith," said she, "do you know that you have nearly broken old Hamish's heart?"

"What is the matter?" said he, looking up in wonder.

"He says you have told him he is not to go out to the shooting with you to-morrow; and that is the first time he has been superseded; and he takes it that you think he is an old man; and he talks of going away to Greenock to join a smack."

"Oh, nonsense," Macleod said. "I was not thinking when I told him. He may come with us if he likes. At the same time, Janet, I should think Norman Ogilvie will laugh at seeing the butler come out as a keeper."

"You know quite well, Keith," said his cousin, "that Hamish is no more a butler than he is captain of the *Umpire* or clerk of

the accounts. Hamish is simply everybody and everything at Castle Dare. And if you speak of Norman Ogilvie—well, I think it would be more like yourself, Keith, to consult the feelings of an old man rather than the opinions of a young one."

"You are always on the right side, Janet. Tell Hamish I am very sorry. I meant him no disrespect. And he may call me at one in the morning if he likes. He never looked on me but as a bit of his various machinery for killing things."

"That is not fair of you, Keith. Old Hamish would give his right hand to save you the scratch of a thorn."

She went off to cheer the old man; and he turned to his book. But it was not to read it; it was only to stare at the outside of it, in an absent sort of way. The fact is he had found in it the story of a young aide-de-camp who was entrusted with a message to a distant part of the field while a battle was going forward, and who in mere bravado rode across a part of the ground open to the enemy's fire. He came back laughing. He had been hit, he confessed; but he had escaped; and he carelessly shook a drop or two of blood from a flesh-wound on his hand. Suddenly, however, he turned pale, wavered a little, and then fell forward on his horse's neck, a corpse.

Macleod was thinking about this story rather gloomily. But at last he got up with a more cheerful air, and seized his cap.

"And if it is my death-wound I have got," he was thinking to himself, as he set out for the boat that was waiting for him at the shore, "I will not cry out too soon."

CHAPTER XIV.

A FRIEND.

His death-wound! There was but little suggestion of any death-wound about the manner or speech of this light-hearted and frank-spoken fellow who now welcomed his old friend Ogilvie

ashore. He swung the gun-case into the cart as if it had been a bit of thread. He himself would carry Ogilvie's top-coat over his arm.

"And why have you not come in your hunting tartan?" said he, observing the very precise and correct shooting costume of the young man.

"Not likely," said Mr. Ogilvie, laughing. "I don't like walking through clouds with bare knees, with a chance of sitting down on an adder or two. And I'll tell you what it is, Macleod: if the morning is wet I will not go out stalking, if all the stags in Christendom were there. I know what it is, I have had enough of it in my younger days"——

"My dear fellow," Macleod said seriously, "you must not talk here as if you could do what you liked. It is not what you wish to do, or what you don't wish to do; it is what Hamish orders to have done. Do you think I would dare to tell Hamish what we must do to-morrow? And do you think in any case Hamish would allow a kilt to be worn when we go off stalking?"

"Very well, then, I will see Hamish myself; I dare say he remembers me."

And he did see Hamish that evening, and it was arranged between them that if the morning looked threatening they would leave the deer alone, and would merely take the lower lying moors in the immediate neighbourhood of Castle Dare. And Hamish took great care to impress on the young man that Macleod had not yet taken a gun in his hand, merely that there should be a decent bit of shooting when his guest arrived.

"And he will say to me, only yesterday," observed Hamish confidentially, "it was yesterday itself he wass saying to me, 'Hamish, when Mr. Ogilvie comes here, it will only be six days or seven days he will be able to stop, and you will try to get him two or three stags. And Hamish,' this iss what he will say to me, 'you will pay no heed to me, for I hef plenty of the shooting whatever, from the one year's end to the other year's end, and it is Mr. Ogilvie you will look after.' And you do not mind the rain, sir? It iss fine warm clothes you have got on—fine woollen clothes you have, and what harm will a shower do?"

"Oh, I don't mind the rain, so long as I can keep moving—that's the fact, Hamish," replied Mr. Ogilvie; "but I don't like lying in wet heather for an hour at a stretch. And I don't care how few birds there are; there will be plenty to keep us walking. So you remember me after all, Hamish?"

"Oh ay, sir," said Hamish, with a demure twinkle in his eye. "I mind fine the time you will fahl into the water off the rock in Loch na Keal."

"Yes, indeed," remarked Mr. Ogilvie, "that is precisely what I don't see the fun of doing, now that I have got to man's estate, and have a wholesome fear of killing myself. Do you think I would lie down now on wet seaweed, and get slowly soaked through with the rain for a whole hour, on the chance of a seal coming on the other side of the rock? When I tried to get up I was as stiff as a stone. I could not have lifted the rifle if a hundred seals had been there. And it was no wonder at all I slipped down into the water."

"But the sea-water," said Hamish, gravely, "there will be no harm come to you of the sea-water."

"I want to have as little as possible of either sea-water or rain-water," said Mr. Ogilvie, with decision. "I believe Macleod is half an otter himself."

Hamish did not like this, but he only said respectfully—

"I do not think Sir Keith is afraid of a shower of rain whatever."

These gloomy anticipations were surely uncalled for; for during the whole of the past week the Western Isles had basked in uninterrupted sunlight, with blue skies over the fair blue seas, and a resinous warmth exhaling from the lonely moors. But all the same, next morning broke as if Mr. Ogilvie's forebodings were only too likely to be realised. The sea was leaden-hued, and apparently still, though the booming of the Atlantic swell into the great caverns could be heard; Staffa, and Lunga, and the Dutchman were of a dismal black; the brighter colours of Ulva and Colonsay seemed coldly grey and green; and heavy banks of cloud lay along the land, running out to Ru-Treshanish. The noise of the stream rushing down through the fir-wood close to the castle seemed louder than usual, as if rain had fallen

during the night. It was rather cold, too; all that Lady Macleod and Janet could say failed to raise the spirits of their guest.

But when Macleod—dressed in his home-spun tartan—came round from the kennels with the dogs, and Hamish, and the tall red-headed lad, Sandy, it appeared that they considered this to be rather a fine day than otherwise, and were eager to be off.

"Come along, Ogilvie," Macleod cried, as he gave his friend's gun to Sandy, but shouldered his own. "Sorry we haven't a dog-cart to drive you to the moor, but it is not far off."

"I think a cigar in the library would be the best thing for a morning like this," said Ogilvie, rather gloomily, as he put up the collar of his shooting-jacket, for a drop or two of rain had fallen.

"Nonsense, man; the first bird you kill will cheer you up."

Macleod was right; they had just passed through the wood of young larches close to Castle Dare, and were ascending a rough stone road that led by the side of a deep glen, when a sudden whirr, close by them, startled the silence of this gloomy morning. In an instant Macleod had whipped his gun from his shoulder and thrust it into Ogilvie's hands. By the time the young man had full cocked the right barrel and taken a quick aim, the bird was half-way across the valley; but all the same he fired. For another second the bird continued its flight, but in a slightly irregular fashion; then down it went like a stone into the heather, on the opposite side of the chasm.

"Well done, sir!" cried old Hamish.

"Bravo!" called out Macleod.

"It was a grand long shot!" said Sandy, as he unslipped the sagacious old retriever, and sent her down into the glen.

They had scarcely spoken when another dark object, looking to the startled eye as if it were the size of a house, sprang from the heather close by and went off like an arrow, uttering a succession of sharp crowings. Why did not he fire? Then they saw him in wild despair whip down the gun, full-cock the left barrel, and put it up again. The bird was just disappearing, over a crest of rising ground, and as Ogilvie fired he disappeared altogether.

"He's down, sir!" cried Hamish, in great excitement.

"I don't think so," Ogilvie answered, with a doubtful air on his face, but with a bright gladness in his eyes all the same.

"He's down, sir!" Hamish re-asserted. "Come away, Sandy, with the dog!" he shouted to the red-headed lad, who had gone down into the glen to help Nell in her researches. By this time they saw that Sandy was re-crossing the burn with the grouse in his hand, Nell following him eagerly. The tall lad sprang up the side of the glen in a miraculous fashion, catching here and there by a bunch of heather or the stump of a young larch, and presently he had rejoined the party.

"Tek time, sir," said he; "tek time. Maybe there is more of them about here. And the other one I marked him down from the other side. We will get him ferry well."

They found nothing, however, until they had got to the other side of the hill, where Nell speedily made herself mistress of the other bird—a fine young cock grouse, plump, and in splendid plumage.

"And what do you think of the morning now, Ogilvie?" Macleod asked.

"Oh, I dare say it will clear," said he, shyly; and he endeavoured to make light of Hamish's assertions that they were "ferry pretty shots—ferry good shots; and it was always a right thing to put cartridges in the barrels at the door of a house, for no one could tell what might be close to the house; and he was sure that Mr. Ogilvie had not forgotten the use of a gun since he went away from the hills to live in England."

"But look here, Macleod," Mr. Ogilvie said: "why did not you fire yourself?"—and he was very properly surprised; for the most generous and self-denying of men are apt to claim their rights when a grouse gets up to their side.

"Oh," said Macleod simply, "I wanted you to have a shot."

And indeed all through the day he was obviously far more concerned about Ogilvie's shooting than his own. He took all the hardest work on himself—taking the outside beat, for example, if there was a bit of unpromising ground to be got over. When one or other of the dogs suddenly showed by its uplifted fore-paw, its rigid tail, and its slow, cautious, timid look round for help and encouragement, that there was something ahead of

more importance than a lark, Macleod would run all the risks of waiting to give Ogilvie time to come up. If a hare ran across with any chance of coming within shot of Ogilvie, Macleod let her go by unscathed. And the young gentleman from the south knew enough about shooting to understand how he was being favoured both by his host and—what was a more unlikely thing—by Hamish.

He was shooting very well, too; and his spirits rose and rose until the lowering day was forgotten altogether.

"We are in for a soaker this time," he cried quite cheerfully, looking around at one moment.

All this lonely world of olive greens and browns had grown strangely dark. Even the hum of the flies—the only sound audible in these high solitudes away from the sea—seemed stilled; and a cold wind began to blow over from Ben-an-Sloich. The plain of the valley in front of them began to fade from view; then they found themselves enveloped in a clammy fog that settled on their clothes and hung about their eyelids and beard; while water began to run down the barrels of their guns. The wind blew harder and harder; presently they seemed to spring out of the darkness; and, turning, they found that the cloud had swept onward towards the sea, leaving the rocks on the nearest hill-side all glittering wet in the brief burst of sunlight. It was but a glimmer. Heavier clouds came sweeping over; downright rain began to pour. But Ogilvie kept manfully to his work. He climbed over the stone walls, gripping on with his wet hands. He splashed through the boggy land, paying no attention to his footsteps. And at last he got to following Macleod's plan of crossing a burn, which was merely to wade through the foaming brown water instead of looking out for big stones. By this time the letters in his breast-pocket were a mass of pulp.

"Look here, Macleod," said he, with the rain running down his face," I can't tell the difference between one bird and another. If I shoot a partridge it isn't my fault."

"All right," said Macleod. "If a partridge is fool enough to be up here, it deserves it."

Just at this moment Mr. Ogilvie suddenly threw up his

hands and his gun, as if to protect his face. An extraordinary object,—a winged object, apparently without a tail—a whirring bunch of loose grey feathers—a creature resembling no known fowl—had been put up by one of the dogs, and it had flown direct at Ogilvie's head. It passed him at about half-a-yard's distance.

"What in all the world is that?" he cried, jumping round to have a look at it.

"Why," said Macleod, who was roaring with laughter, "it is a baby black-cock, just out of the shell, I should think!"

A sudden noise behind him caused him to wheel round, and instinctively he put up his gun. He took it down again.

"That is the old hen," said he; "we'll leave her to look after her chicks. Hamish, get in the dogs, or they'll be for eating some of those young ones. And you, Sandy, where was it you left the basket? We will go for our splendid banquet now, Ogilvie."

That was an odd-looking party that by and by might have been seen crouching under the lee of a stone wall, with a small brook running by their feet. They had taken down wet stones for seats; and these were somewhat insecurely fixed on the steep bank. But neither the rain, nor the gloom, nor the loneliness of the silent moors, seemed to have damped their spirits much.

"It really is awfully kind of you, Ogilvie," Macleod said, as he threw half a sandwich to the old black retriever, "to take pity on a solitary fellow like myself. You can't tell how glad I was to see you on the bridge of the steamer. And now that you have taken all the trouble to come to this place—and have taken your chance of our poor shooting—this is the sort of day you get!"

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Ogilvie, who did not refuse to have his tumbler replenished by the attentive Hamish, "it is quite the other way. I consider myself precious lucky. I consider the shooting first-rate; and it isn't every fellow would deliberately hand the whole thing over to his friend—as you have been doing all day. And I suppose bad weather is as bad elsewhere as it is here?"

Macleod was carelessly filling his pipe—and obviously thinking of something very different.

"Man, Ogilvie," he said, in a burst of confidence, "I never knew before how fearfully lonely a life we lead here. If we were out on one of the Treshnish Islands, with nothing round us but skarts and gulls, we could scarcely be lonelier. And I have been thinking all the morning what this must look like to you."

He glanced round—at the sombre browns and greens of the solitary moorland—at the black rocks jutting out here and there from the scant grass—at the silent and gloomy hills, and the overhanging clouds.

"I have been thinking of the beautiful places we saw in London—and the crowds of people—the constant change, and amusement, and life. And I shouldn't wonder if you packed up your traps to-morrow morning, and fled."

"My dear boy," observed Mr. Ogilvie, confidentially, "you are giving me credit for a vast amount of sentiment. I haven't got it. I don't know what it is. But I know when I'm jolly well off. I know when I am in good quarters, with good shooting, and with a good sort of chap to go about with. As for London—bah! I rather think you got your eyes dazzled for a minute, Macleod. You weren't long enough there to find it out. And wouldn't you get precious tired of big dinners, and garden parties, and all that stuff, after a time? Macleod, do you mean to tell me you ever saw anything at Lady Beauregard's as fine as *that?*"

And he pointed to a goodly show of birds, with a hare or two, that Sandy had taken out of the bag, so as to count them.

"Of course," said this wise young man, "there is one case in which that London life is all very well. If a man is awful spoons on a girl, then of course he can trot after her from house to house, and walk his feet off in the Park. I remember a fellow saying a very clever thing about the reasons that took a man into society. What was it now? Let me see—it was either to look out for a wife—or—or——"

Mr. Ogilvie was trying to recollect the epigram and to light a wax match at the same time; and he failed in both.

"Well," said he, "I won't spoil it; but don't you believe that

any one you met in London wouldn't be precious glad to change places with us at this moment?"

Any one? What was the situation? Pouring rain, leaden skies, the gloomy solitude of the high moors, the sound of roaring waters. And here they were crouching under a stone wall, with their dripping fingers lighting match after match for their damp pipes, with not a few midges in the moist and clammy air, and with a faint halo of steam plainly arising from the leather of their boots. When Fionaghal the Fair Stranger came from over the blue seas to her new home, was this the picture of Highland life that was presented to her?

"Lady Beauregard for example?" said Macleod.

"Oh, I am not talking about women," observed the sagacious boy; "I never could make out a woman's notions about anything. I dare say they like London life well enough; for there they can show off their shoulders and their diamonds."

"Ogilvie," Macleod said, with a sudden earnestness, "I am fretting my heart out here—that is the fact. If it were not for the poor old mother—and Janet—but I will tell you another time."

He got up on his feet, and took his gun from Sandy. His companion—wondering not a little, but saying nothing—did likewise. Was this the man who had always seemed rather proud of his hard life on the hills? who had regarded the idleness and effeminacy of town-life with something of an unexpressed scorn? A young fellow in robust health and splendid spirits—an eager sportsman and an accurate shot—out for his first shooting-day of the year: was it intelligible that he should be visited by sentimental regrets for London drawing-rooms and vapid talk? The getting up of a snipe interrupted these speculations; Ogilvie blazed away, missing with both barrels; Macleod, who had been waiting to see the effect of the shots, then put up his gun, and presently the bird tumbled down some fifty yards off.

"You haven't warmed to it yet," Macleod said, charitably. "The first half-hour after luncheon a man always shoots badly."

"Especially when his clothes are glued to his skin from head to foot," said Ogilvie.

"You will soon walk some heat into yourself."

And again they went on, Macleod pursuing the same tactics, so that his companion had the cream of the shooting. Despite the continual soaking rain, Ogilvie's spirits seemed to become more and more buoyant. He was shooting capitally; one very long shot he made, bringing down an old black-cock with a thump on the heather, causing Hamish to exclaim—

"Well done, sir! It is a glass of whisky you will deserve for that shot."

Whereupon Mr. Ogilvie stopped and modestly hinted that he would accept of at least a moiety of the proffered reward.

"Do you know, Hamish," said he, "that it is the greatest comfort in the world to get wet right through, for you know you can't be worse, and it gives you no trouble?"

"And a whole glass will do you no harm, sir," shrewdly observed Hamish.

"Not in the clouds."

"The what, sir?"

"The clouds. Don't you consider we are going shooting through clouds?"

"There will be a snipe or two down here, sir," said Hamish, moving on; for he could not understand conundrums—especially conundrums in English.

The day remained of this moist character to the end; but they had plenty of sport; and they had a heavy bag on their return to Castle Dare. Macleod was rather silent on the way home. Ogilvie was still at a loss to know why his friend should have taken this sudden dislike to living in a place he had lived in all his life. Nor could he understand why Macleod should have deliberately surrendered to him the chance of bagging the brace of grouse that got up by the side of the road. It was scarcely, he considered, within the possibilities of human nature.

CHAPTER XV.

A CONFESSION.

And once again the big dining-hall of Castle Dare was ablaze with candles; and Janet was there, gravely listening to the garrulous talk of the boy-officer; and Keith Macleod, in his dress tartan; and the noble-looking old lady at the head of the table, who more than once expressed to her guest, in that sweetly-modulated and gracious voice of hers, how sorry she was he had had so bad a day for the first day of his visit.

"It is different with Keith," said she, "for he is used to be out in all weathers. He has been brought up to live out of doors."

"But you know, auntie," said Janet Macleod, "a soldier is much of the same thing. Did you ever hear of a soldier with an umbrella?"

"All I know is," remarked Mr. Ogilvie—who, in his smart evening dress, and with his face flushed into a rosy warmth after the cold and wet, did not look particularly miserable—"that I don't remember ever enjoying myself so much in one day. But the fact is, Lady Macleod, your son gave me all the shooting; and Hamish was sounding my praises all day long, so that I almost got to think I could shoot the birds without putting up the gun at all; and when I made a frightful bad miss, everybody declared the bird was dead round the other side of the hill."

"And indeed you were not making many misses," Macleod said. "But we will try your nerve, Ogilvie, with a stag or two, I hope."

"I am on for anything. What with Hamish's flattery and the luck I had to-day, I begin to believe I could bag a brace of tigers if they were coming at me fifty miles an hour."

Dinner over, and Donald having played his best (no doubt he had learned that the stranger was an officer in the 93rd), the ladies left the dining-hall, and presently Macleod proposed to his

friend that they should go into the library and have a smoke. Ogilvie was nothing loth. They went into the odd little room, with its guns and rods, and stuffed birds, and, lying prominently on the writing-table, a valuable little heap of dressed otter-skins. Although the night was scarcely cold enough to demand it, there was a log of wood burning in the fireplace; there were two easy-chairs, low and roomy; and on the mantelpiece were some glasses and a big, black, broad-bottomed bottle, such as used to carry the still vintages of Champagne even into the remote wilds of the Highlands, before the art of making sparkling wines had been discovered. Mr. Ogilvie lit a cigar; stretched out his feet towards the blazing log; and rubbed his hands—which were not as white as usual.

"You are a lucky fellow, Macleod," said he, "and you don't know it. You have everything about you here to make life enjoyable."

"And I feel like a slave tied to a galley-oar," said he quickly. "I try to hide it from the mother—for it would break her heart—and from Janet too; but every morning I rise, the dismalness of being alone here—of being caged up alone—eats more and more into my heart. When I look at you, Ogilvie—to-morrow morning you could go spinning off to any quarter you liked—to see any one you wanted to see——"

"Macleod," said his companion, looking up, and yet speaking rather slowly and timidly, "if I were to say what would naturally occur to any one—you won't be offended? What you have been telling me is absurd, unnatural, impossible, unless there is a woman in the case."

"And what then?" Macleod said quickly, as he regarded his friend with a watchful look. "You have guessed?"

"Yes," said the other—"Gertrude White."

Macleod was silent for a second or two. Then he sate down.

"I scarcely care who knows it now," said he absently, "so long as I can't fight it out of my own mind. I tried not to know it. I tried not to believe it. I argued with myself—laughed at myself—invented a hundred explanations of this cruel thing that was gnawing away at my heart and giving me no peace night or day. Why, man, Ogilvie, I have read 'Penden-

nis'! Would you think it possible that any one who has read 'Pendennis' could ever fall in love with an actress?"

He jumped to his feet again—walked up and down a second or two—twisting the while a bit of a casting-line round his finger so that it threatened to cut into the flesh.

"But I will tell you now, Ogilvie—now that I am speaking to any one about it," said he—and he spoke in a rapid, deep, earnest voice, obviously not caring much what his companion might think, so that he could relieve his overburdened mind—"that it was not any actress I fell in love with. I never saw her in a theatre but that once. I hated the theatre whenever I thought of her in it. I dared scarcely open a newspaper, lest I should see her name. I turned away from the posters in the streets: when I happened by some accident to see her publicly paraded that way, I shuddered all through—with shame, I think; and I got to look on her father as a sort of devil, that had been allowed to drive about that beautiful creature in vile chains. Oh! I cannot tell you. When I have heard him talking away in that infernal, cold, precise way, about her duties to her art—and insisting that she should have no sentiments or feelings of her own, and that she should simply use every emotion as a bit of something to impose on the public—a bit of her trade—an exposure of her own feelings to make people clap their hands—I have sat still and wondered at myself that I did not jump up and catch him by the throat and shake the life out of his miserable body."

"You have cut your hand, Macleod."

He shook a drop or two of blood off.

"Why, Ogilvie, when I saw you on the bridge of the steamer, I nearly went mad with delight. I said to myself, 'Here is some one who has seen her, and spoken to her; who will know when I tell him.' And now that I am telling you of it, Ogilvie, you will see—you will understand—that it is not any actress I have fallen in love with—it was not the fascination of an actress at all—but the fascination of the woman herself; the fascination of her voice, and her sweet ways, and the very way she walked too, and the tenderness of her heart. There was a sort of wonder about her; whatever she did, or said, was so beautiful, and

simple, and sweet! And day after day I said to myself that my interest in this beautiful woman was nothing. Some one told me there had been rumours: I laughed. Could any one suppose I was going to play 'Pendennis' over again? And then as the time came for me to leave, I was glad and I was miserable at the same time. I despised myself for being miserable. And then I said to myself, 'This stupid misery is only the fancy of a boy. Wait till you get back to Castle Dare, and the rough seas, and the hard work of the stalking. There is no sickness and sentiment on the side of Ben-an-Sloich.' And so I was glad to come to Castle Dare; and to see the old mother, and Janet, and Hamish; and the sound of the pipes, Ogilvie, when I heard them away in the steamer, that brought tears to my eyes; and I said to myself, 'Now you are at home again, and there will be no more nonsense of idle thinking.' And what has it come to? I would give everything I possess in the world to see her face once more—ay, to be in the same town where she is. I read the papers, trying to find out where she is. Morning and night it is the same—a fire, burning and burning—of impatience, and misery, and a craving just to see her face and hear her speak."

Ogilvie did not know what to say. There was something in this passionate confession—in the cry wrung from a strong man—and in the rude eloquence that here and there burst from him—that altogether drove ordinary words of counsel or consolation out of the young man's mind.

"You have been hard hit, Macleod," he said, with some earnestness.

"That is just it," Macleod said almost bitterly. "You fire at a bird. You think you have missed him. He sails away as if there was nothing the matter, and the rest of the covey no doubt think he is as well as any of them. But suddenly you see there is something wrong. He gets apart from the others; he towers; then down he comes, as dead as a stone. You did not guess anything of this in London?"

"Well," said Ogilvie, rather inclined to beat about the bush, "I thought you were paying her a good deal of attention. But then—she is very popular, you know—and receives a good deal of attention—and, and, the fact is, she is an uncommonly pretty

girl, and I thought you were flirting a bit with her, but nothing more than that. I had no idea it was something more serious than that."

"Ay," Macleod said, "if I myself had only known! If it was a plunge—as people talk about falling in love with a woman—why the next morning I would have shaken myself free of it, as a Newfoundland dog shakes himself free of the water. But a fever—a madness—that slowly gains on you—and you look around and say it is nothing—but day after day it burns more and more. And it is no longer something that you can look at apart from yourself—it is your very self; and sometimes, Ogilvie, I wonder whether it is all true, or whether it is mad I am altogether. Newcastle—do you know Newcastle?"

"I have passed through it, of course," his companion said, more and more amazed at the vehemence of his speech.

"It is there she is now—I have seen it in the papers; and it is Newcastle—Newcastle—Newcastle—I am thinking of from morning till night; and if I could only see one of the streets of it I should be glad. They say it is smoky and grimy; I should be breathing sunlight if I lived in the most squalid of all its houses! And they say she is going to Liverpool, and to Manchester, and to Leeds; and it is as if my very life were being drawn away from me. I try to think what people may be around her; I try to imagine what she is doing at a particular hour of the day; and I feel as if I were shut away in an island in the middle of the Atlantic, with nothing but the sound of the waves around my ears. Ogilvie, it is enough to drive a man out of his senses."

"But look here, Macleod," said Ogilvie, pulling himself together; for it was hard to resist the influence of this vehement and uncontrollable passion—"look here, man: why don't you think of it in cold blood? Do you expect me to sympathise with you, as a friend? Or would you like to know what any ordinary man of the world would think of the whole case?"

"Don't give me your advice, Ogilvie," said he, untwining and throwing away the bit of casting-line that had cut into his finger. "It is far beyond that. Let me talk to you—that is

all. I should have gone mad in another week, if I had had no one to speak to; and as it is, what better am I than mad? It is not anything to be analysed and cured: it is my very self; and what have I become?"

"But look here, Macleod—I want to ask you a question: would you marry her?"

The common-sense of the younger man was re-asserting itself. This was what any one—looking at the whole situation from the Aldershot point of view—would at the outset demand? But if Macleod had known all that was implied in the question, it is probable that a friendship that had existed from boyhood would then and there have been severed. He took it that Ogilvie was merely referring to the thousand and one obstacles that lay between him and that obvious and natural goal.

"Marry her!" he exclaimed. "Yes—you are right to look at it in that way—to think of what it will all lead to. When I look forward, I see nothing but a maze of impossibilities and trouble. One might as well have fallen in love with one of the Roman maidens in the temple of Vesta. She is a white slave. She is a sacrifice to the monstrous theories of that bloodless old Pagan, her father. And then she is courted and flattered on all sides; she lives in a smoke of incense: do you think, even supposing that all other difficulties were removed — that she cared for no one else, that she were to care for me, that the influence of her father was gone—do you think she would surrender all the admiration she provokes and the excitement of the life she leads, to come and live in a dungeon in the Highlands? A single day like to-day would kill her—she is so fine, and delicate—like a rose-leaf, I have often thought. No, no, Ogilvie, I have thought of it every way. It is like a riddle that you twist and twist about, to try and get the answer; and I can get no answer at all, unless wishing that I had never been born. And, perhaps that would have been better."

"You take too gloomy a view of it, Macleod," said Ogilvie. "For one thing, look at the common-sense of the matter. Suppose that she is very ambitious to succeed in her profession, that is all very well; but mind you, it is a very hard life. And if you put before her the chance of being styled Lady Macleod

—well, I may be wrong, but I should say that would count for something. I haven't known many actresses myself——"

"That is idle talk," Macleod said; and then he added proudly, "You do not know this woman as I know her."

He put aside his pipe; but in truth he had never lit it.

"Come," said he, with a tired look, "I have bored you enough. You won't mind, Ogilvie? The whole of the day I was saying to myself that I would keep all this thing to myself, if my heart burst over it; but you see I could not do it; and I have made you the victim after all. And we will go into the drawing-room now; and we will have a song. And that was a very good song you sang one night in London, Ogilvie—it was about 'Death's black wine'—and do you think you could sing us that song to-night?"

Ogilvie looked at him.

"I don't know what you mean by the way you are talking, Macleod," said he.

"Oh," said he, with a laugh that did not sound quite natural, "have you forgotten it? Well, then, Janet will sing us another song—that is, 'Farewell, Manchester.' And we will go to bed soon to-night; for I have not been having much sleep lately. But it is a good song—it is a song you do not easily forget—that about 'Death's black wine.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

REBELLION.

And where was she now—that strange creature who had bewildered and blinded his eyes and so sorely stricken his heart? It was perhaps not the least part of his trouble that all his passionate yearning to see her, and all his thinking about her, and the scenes in which he had met her, seemed unable to conjure up any satisfactory vision of her. The longing of his heart went

out from him to meet—a phantom. She appeared before him in a hundred shapes, now one, now the other; but all possessed with a terrible fascination from which it was in vain for him to try to flee.

Which was she, then—the pale and sensitive and thoughtful-eyed girl who listened with such intense interest to the gloomy tales of the northern seas; who was so fine, and perfect, and delicate; who walked so gracefully and smiled so sweetly; the timid and gentle companion and friend?

Or the wild coquette, with her arch, shy ways, and her serious laughing, and her befooling of the poor stupid lover? He could hear her laugh now; he could see her feed her canary from her own lips; where was the old mother whom that madcap girl teased, and petted, and delighted?

Or was not this she—this calm and gracious woman who received as of right the multitude of attentions that all men—and women, too—were glad to pay her? The air fine about her; the south winds fanning her cheek; the day long, and balmy, and clear. The white-sailed boats glide slowly through the water; there is a sound of music, and of gentle talk; a butterfly comes fluttering over the blue summer seas. And then there is a murmuring refrain in the lapping of the waves—*Rose-leaf, Rose-leaf, what faint wind will carry you away to the south?*

Or this audacious Duchess of Devonshire, with the flashing black eyes, and a saucy smile on her lips? She knows that every one regards her; but what of that? Away she goes through the brilliant throng with the young Highland officer, with glowing light and gay costumes and joyous music all around her. What do you think of her, you poor clown, standing there all alone and melancholy, with your cap and bells? Has she pierced your heart, too, with a flash of the saucy black eyes?

But there is still another vision; and perhaps this solitary dreamer, who has no eyes for the great slopes of Ben-an-Sloich that stretch into the clouds, and no ears for the soft calling of sea-birds as they wheel over his head, tries hardest to fix this one in his memory. Here she is the neat and watchful house-mistress, with all things bright and shining around her; and she appears, too, as the meek daughter and the kind and caressing

sister. Is it not hard that she should be torn from this quiet little haven of domestic duties and family affection, to be bound hand and foot in the chains of art and flung into the arena to amuse that great ghoul-faced thing, the public? The white slave does not complain. While as yet she may, she presides over the cheerful table; and the beautiful small hands are helpful; and that light morning costume is a wonder of simplicity and grace. And then the garden—and the soft summer air, and the pretty ways of the two sisters: why should not this simple, homely, beautiful life last for ever, if only the summer and the roses would last for ever?

But suppose now that we turn aside from these fanciful pictures of Macleod's, and take a more commonplace one of which he could have no notion whatever? It is night—a wet and dismal night—and a four-wheeled cab is jolted along through the dark and almost deserted thoroughfares of Manchester. Miss Gertrude White is in the cab, and the truth is that she is in a thorough bad temper. Whether it was the unseemly scuffle that took place in the gallery during the performance; or whether it is that the streets of Manchester in the midst of rain, and after midnight, are not inspiriting; or whether it is merely that she has got a headache, it is certain that Miss White is in an ill humour, and that she has not spoken a word to her maid, her only companion, since together they left the theatre. At length the cab stops opposite an hotel, which is apparently closed for the night. They get out; cross the muddy pavements under the glare of a gas-lamp; after some delay get into the hotel; pass through a dimly-lit and empty corridor; and then Miss White bids her maid good night and opens the door of a small parlour.

Here there is a more cheerful scene. There is a fire in the room; and there is supper laid on the table; while Mr. White, with his feet on the fender and his back turned to the lamp, is seated in an easy-chair and holding up a book to the light so that the pages almost touch his gold-rimmed spectacles. Miss White sits down on the sofa on the dark side of the room. She has made no response to his greeting of "Well, Gerty?"

At length Mr. White becomes aware that his daughter is

sitting there with her things on, and he turns from his book to her.

"Well, Gerty," he repeats, "aren't you going to have some supper?"

"No, thank you," she says.

"Come, come," he remonstrates, "that wont do. You must have some supper. Shall Jane get you a cup of tea?"

"I don't suppose there is any one up below; besides, I don't want it," says Miss White, rather wearily.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing," she answers, and then she looks at the mantelpiece. "No letter from Carry?"

"No."

"Well, I hope you won't make her an actress, papa," observes Miss White, with no relevance, but with considerable sharpness in her tone.

In fact this remark was so unexpected and uncalled-for that Mr. White suddenly put his book down on his knee, and turned his gold spectacles full on his daughter's face.

"I will beg you to remember, Gerty," he remarked, with some dignity, "that I did not make you an actress, if that is what you imply. If it had not been entirely your wish, I should never have encouraged you; and I think it shows great ingratitude, not only to me but to the public also, that when you have succeeded in obtaining a position such as any woman in the country might envy, you treat your good fortune with indifference and show nothing but discontent. I cannot tell what has come over you of late. You ought certainly to be the last to say anything against a profession that has gained for you such a large share of public favour——"

"Public favour!" she said, with a bitter laugh. "Who is the favourite of the public in this very town? Why, the girl who plays in that farce—who smokes a cigarette, and walks round the stage like a man, and dances a breakdown. Why wasn't I taught to dance breakdowns?"

Her father was vexed; for this was not the first time she had dropped small rebellious hints. And if this feeling grew, she might come to question his most cherished theories!

"I should think you were jealous of that girl," said he petulantly, "if it were not too ridiculous. You ought to remember that she is an established favourite here. She has amused these people year after year; they look on her as an old friend; they are grateful to her. The means she uses to make people laugh may not meet with your approval; but she knows her own business, doubtless; and she succeeds in her own way."

"Ah well," said Miss White, as she put aside her bonnet, "I hope you won't bring up Carry to this sort of life."

"To what sort of life?" her father exclaimed angrily. "Haven't you everything that can make life pleasant. I don't know what more you want. You have not a single care. You are petted and caressed wherever you go. And you ought to have the delight of knowing that the further you advance in your art the further rewards are in store for you. The way is clear before you. You have youth and strength; and the public is only too anxious to applaud whatever you undertake. And yet you complain of your manner of life!"

"It isn't the life of a human being at all!" she said, boldly—but perhaps it was only her headache, or her weariness, or her ill humour that drove her to this rebellion—"it is the cutting one's self off from everything that makes life worth having. It is a continual degradation—the exhibition of feelings that ought to be a woman's most sacred and secret possession. And what will the end of it be? Already I begin to think I don't know what I am. I have to sympathise with so many characters—I have to be so many different people—that I don't quite know what my own character is, or if I have any at all——"

Her father was staring at her in amazement. What had led her into these fantastic notions? While she was professing that her ambition to become a great and famous actress was the one ruling thought and object of her life, was she really envying the poor domestic drudge whom she saw coming to the theatre to enjoy herself with her fool of a husband, having withdrawn for an hour or two from her housekeeping-books and her squalling children? At all events, Miss White left him in no doubt as to her sentiments at that precise moment. She talked rapidly, and with a good deal of bitter feeling; but it was quite obvious,

from the clearness of her line of contention, that she had been thinking over the matter. And while it was all a prayer that her sister Carry might be left to live a natural life, and that she should not be compelled to exhibit, for gain or applause, emotions which a woman would naturally lock up in her own heart, it was also a bitter protest against her own lot. What was she to become, she asked? A dram-drinker of fictitious sentiment? A Ten-Minutes' Emotionalist? It was this last phrase that flashed in a new light on her father's bewildered mind. He remembered it instantly. So that was the source of inspiration?

"Oh, I see now," he said with angry scorn. "You have learned your lesson well. A 'Ten-Minutes' Emotionalist:' I remember. I was wondering who had put such stuff into your head."

She coloured deeply, but said nothing.

"And so you are taking your notion as to what sort of life you would lead, from a Highland savage—a boor, whose only occupations are eating and drinking and killing wild animals. A fine guide, truly! He has had so much experience of æsthetic matters! Or is it *metapheesics* is his hobby? And what, pray, is his notion as to what life should be? That the noblest object of man's ambition should be to kill a stag? It was a mistake for Dante to let his work eat into his heart; he should have devoted himself to shooting rabbits. And Raphael—don't you think he would have improved his digestion by giving up pandering to the public taste for pretty things, and taking to hunting wild boars? That is the theory, isn't it? Is that the *metapheesics* you have learned?"

"You may talk about it," she said rather humbly—for she knew very well she could not stand against her father in argument, especially on a subject that he rather prided himself on having mastered, "but you are not a woman, and you don't know what a woman feels about such things."

"And since when have you made the discovery? What has happened to convince you so suddenly that your professional life is a degradation?"

"Oh," she said carelessly, "I was scarcely thinking of myself.

Of course I know what lies before me. It was about Carry I spoke to you.

"Carry shall decide for herself, as you did; and when she has done so, I hope she won't come and blame me the first time she gets some ridiculous idea into her head."

"Now, papa, that isn't fair," the eldest sister said, in a gentler voice. "You know I never blamed you. I only showed you that even a popular actress sometimes remembers that she is a woman. And if she is a woman you must let her have a grumble occasionally."

This conciliatory tone smoothed the matter down at once; and Mr. White turned to his book with another recommendation to his daughter to take some supper and get to bed.

"I will go now," she said rather wearily, as she rose. "Good-night, papa——What is that?"

She was looking at a parcel that lay on a chair.

"It came for you, to-night. There was seven-and-sixpence to pay for extra carriage—it seems to have been forwarded from place to place."

"As if I had not enough luggage to carry about with me," she said.

But she proceeded to open the parcel all the same, which seemed to be very carefully swathed in repeated covers of canvas. And presently she uttered a slight exclamation. She took up one dark object after another—passing her hand over them, and back again, and finally pressing them to her cheek.

"Just look at these, papa—did you ever in all your life see anything so beautiful?"

She came to a letter, too; which she hastily tore open and read. It was a brief note, in terms of great respect, written by Sir Keith Macleod, and begging Miss White's acceptance of a small parcel of otter skins, which he hoped might be made into some article of attire. Moreover, he had asked his cousin's advice on the matter; and she thought there were enough; but if Miss White, on further inquiry, found she would rather have one or two more, he had no doubt that within the next fortnight or so he could obtain these also. It was a very respectful note.

But there was no shyness or timidity about the manner of

Miss White when she spread those skins out along the sofa, and again and again took them up to praise their extraordinary glossiness and softness.

"Papa," she exclaimed, "it is a present fit for a prince to make!"

"I daresay you will find them useful."

"And whatever is made of them," said she with decision, "that I shall keep for myself—it won't be one of my stage properties."

Her spirits rose wonderfully. She kept on chatting to her father about those lovely skins, and the jacket she would have of them. She asked why he was so dull that evening. She protested that she would not take any supper unless he had some too; whereupon he had a biscuit and a glass of claret, which at all events compelled him to lay aside his book. And then, when she had finished her supper, she suddenly said—

"Now, papa dear, I am going to tell you a great secret. I am going to change the song in the second act."

"Nonsense!" said he; but he was rather glad to see her come back to the interest of her work.

"I am," she said seriously. "Would you like to hear it?"

"You will wake the house up."

"And if the public expect an actress to please them," she said saucily, "they must take the consequences of her practising."

She went to the piano and opened it. There was a fine courage in her manner as she struck the chords and sang the opening lines of the gay song—

"'Three score o' nobles rode up the Kings ha';
But bonnie Glenogie's the flower of them a'!
Wi' his milk-white steed and his bonnie black e'e;'—

but here her voice dropped, and it was almost in a whisper that she let the maiden of the song utter the secret wish of her heart—

"'*Glenogie, dear mither, Glenogie for me.*'"

"Of course," she said, turning round to her father, and speaking in a business-like way, though there was a spice of

proud mischief in her eyes, "there is a stumbling-block, or where would the story be? Glenogie is poor; the mother will not let her have anything to do with him; the girl takes to her bed with the definite intention of dying."

She turned to the piano again—

"'There is, Glenogie, a letter for thee—
O here is, Glenogie, a letter for thee!
The first line he looked at, a light laugh laughed he;
But ere he read through it, tears blinded his e'e.'

"How do you like the air, papa?"

Mr. White did not seem over well pleased. He was quite aware that his daughter was a very clever young woman, and he did not know what insane idea might have got into her head of throwing an allegory at him.

"The air," said he coldly, "is well enough. But I hope you don't expect an English audience to understand that doggerel Scotch."

"Glenogie understood it anyway," said she blithely, "and naturally he rode off at once to see his dying sweetheart.

"'Pale and wan was she when Glenogie gaed ben,
But rosy-red grew she when Glenogie sat down.
She turned away her head, but the smile was in her e'e,
'*O binna feared, mither, I'll maybe no dee.*'"

She shut the piano.

"Isn't it charmingly simple and tender, papa?" she said, with the same mischief in her eyes.

"I think it is foolish of you to think of exchanging that piece of doggerel——"

"For what?" said she, standing in the middle of the room—"for this?"

And therewith she sang some lines—giving an admirable burlesque imitation of herself, and her own gestures, and her own singing in the part she was then performing. It certainly was cruel to treat poor Mrs. Ross's home-made lyric so; but Miss White was burlesquing herself as well as the song she had to sing. And as her father did not know to what lengths this

inconoclastic fit might lead her, he abruptly bade her good-night and went to bed, no doubt hoping that next morning would find the demon exorcised from his daughter.

As for her, she had one more loving look over the skins, and then she carefully read through the note that accompanied them. There was a smile on her face, perhaps of pleasure, perhaps of amusement, at the simplicity of the lines. However, she turned aside, and got hold of a small writing desk which she placed on the table.

"'O here is, Glenogie, a letter for thee!'"

she hummed to herself, with rather a proud look on her face, as she seated herself and opened the desk.

CHAPTER XVII.

"FHIR A BHATA!"

YOUNG Ogilvie had obtained some brief extension of his leave, but even that was drawing to a close; and Macleod saw with a secret dread that the hour of his departure was fast approaching. And yet he had not victimised the young man. After that first burst of confidence he had been sparing in his references to the trouble that had beset him. Of what avail, besides, could Mr. Ogilvie's counsels be? Once or twice he had ventured to approach the subject with some commonplace assurances that there were always difficulties in the way of two people getting married, and that they had to be overcome with patience and courage. The difficulties that Macleod knew of as between himself and that impossible goal were deeper than any mere obtaining of the consent of friends or the arrangement of a way of living. From the moment that the terrible truth was forced on him, he had never regarded his case but as quite hopeless; and yet that in no way moderated his consuming desire to see her—to hear

her speak—even to have correspondence with her. It was something that he could send her a parcel of otter skins.

But all the same Mr. Ogilvie was in some measure a friend of hers. He knew her—he had spoken to her—no doubt when he returned to the south, he would see her one day or another, and he would surely speak of the visit he had paid to Castle Dare. Macleod set about making that visit as pleasant as might be; and the weather aided him. The fair heavens shone over the windy blue seas; and the green island of Ulva lay basking in the sunlight; and as the old *Umpire*, with her heavy bows parting the rushing waves, carried them out to the west, they could see the black skarts standing on the rocks of Gometra, and clouds of puffins wheeling round the dark and lonely pillars of Staffa; while away in the north, as they got clear of Treshnish Point, the mountains of Rhum and of Skye appeared a pale and spectral blue, like ghostly shadows at the horizon. And there was no end to the sports and pastimes that occupied day after day. On their very first expedition up the lonely corries of Ben-an-Sloich young Ogilvie brought down a royal hart—though his hand trembled for ten minutes after he pulled the trigger. They shot wild duck in Loch Scridain; and seals in Loch-na-Keal; and rock-pigeons along the face of the honey-combed cliffs of Gribun. And what was this new form of sport? They were one day being pulled in the gig up a shallow loch in the hope of finding a brood or two of young mergansers, when Macleod, who was seated up at the bow, suddenly called to the men to stop. He beckoned to Ogilvie, who went forward and saw, quietly moving over the seaweed, a hideously ugly fish with the flat head and sinister eyes of a snake. Macleod picked up the boat-hook, steadied himself in the boat, and then drove the iron spike down.

"I have him," he said. "That is the snake of the sea—I hate him as I hate a serpent."

He hoisted out of the water the dead dog-fish, which was about four feet long, and then shook it back.

"Here, Ogilvie," said he, "take the boot-hook. There are plenty about here. Make yourself St. Patrick exterminating snakes."

Ogilvie tried the dog-fish spearing with more or less success;

but it was the means of procuring for him a bitter disappointment. As they went quietly over the seaweed—the keel of the boat hissing through it and occasionally grating on the sand—they perceived that the water was getting a bit deeper, and it was almost impossible to strike the boat-hook straight. At this moment Ogilvie, happening to cast a glance along the rocks close by them, started and seized Macleod's arm. What the frightened eyes of the younger man seemed to see was a great white and grey object lying on the rocks and staring at him with huge black eyes. At first it almost appeared to him to be a man, with a grizzled and hairy face; then he tried to think of some white beast with big black eyes; then he knew. For the next second there was an unwieldy roll down the rocks, and then a splash in the water; and the huge grey seal had disappeared. And there he stood helpless, with the boat-hook in his hand.

"It is my usual luck," said he in despair. "If I had had my rifle in my hand, we should never have got within a hundred yards of the beast. But I got an awful fright. I never before saw a live seal just in front of one's nose like that."

"You would have missed him," said Macleod, coolly.

"At a dozen yards?"

"Yes. When you come on one so near as that you are too startled to take aim. You would have blazed away and missed."

"I don't think so," said Ogilvie, with some modest persistence. "When I shot that stag I was steady enough, though I felt my heart thumping away like fun."

"There you had plenty of time to take your aim—and a rock to rest your rifle on." And then he added, "You would have broken Hamish's heart, Ogilvie, if you had missed that stag. He was quite determined you should have one on your first day out; and I never saw him take such elaborate precautions before. There isn't one of the younger men can match Hamish, though he was bred a sailor."

"Well," Mr. Ogilvie admitted, "I began to think we were having a great deal of trouble for nothing; especially when it seemed as though the wind were blowing half-a-dozen ways in the one valley."

"Why, man," Macleod said, "Hamish knows every one of

those eddies just as if they were all down on a chart. And he is very determined, too, you shall have another stag before you go, Ogilvie; for it is not much amusement we have been giving you since you came to us."

"That is why I feel so particularly jolly at the notion of having to go back," said Mr. Ogilvie, with very much the air of a schoolboy at the end of his holiday. "The day after to-morrow too."

'To-morrow, then, we will try to get a stag for you; and the day after you can spend what time you can at the pools in Glen Muick."

These two last days were right royal days for the guest at Castle Dare. On the deer-stalking expedition Macleod simply refused to take his rifle with him; and spent all his time in whispered consultations with Hamish, and with eager watching of every bird whose solitary flight along the mountain-side might startle the wary hinds. After a long day of patient and stealthy creeping, and walking through bogs and streams, and slow toiling up rocky slopes, the party returned home in the evening; and when it was found that a splendid stag—with brow, bay, and tray, and crockets complete—was strapped on to the pony; and when the word was passed that Sandy the red-haired and Coll Black were to take the pony to a certain well-known cairn where another monarch of the hills lay slain, there was a great rejoicing through Castle Dare, and Lady Macleod herself must needs come out to shake hands with her guest and to congratulate him on his good fortune.

"It is little we have been able to do to entertain you," said the old silver-haired lady, "but I am glad you have got a stag or two."

"I knew what Highland hospitality was before I came to Castle Dare," said the boy, modestly; "but you have been kinder to me even than anything I knew before."

"And you will leave the heads with Hamish," said she, "and we will send them to Glasgow to be mounted for you, and then we will send them south to you."

"Indeed no," said he (though he was thinking to himself that it was no wonder the Macleods of Dare were poor), "I will not

put you to any such trouble. I will make my own arrangements with Hamish."

"Then you will tell him not to forget Aldershot."

"I think, Lady Macleod," said the young lieutenant, "that my mess-companions will be sorry to hear that I have left Dare. I should think they ought to have drunk your health many times ere now."

Next day, moreover, he was equally successful by the side of the deep brown pools in Glen Muick. He was a pretty fair fisherman, though he had had but small experience with such a mighty engine of a rod as Hamish put into his hands. When, however, he showed Hamish the fine assortment of salmon-flies he had brought with him, the old man only shook his head. Thereafter, whenever Hamish went with him, nothing was said about flies until they neared the side of the brawling stream that came pouring down between the grey rocks and the patches of moist brown moor. Hamish would sit down on a stone, and take out a tin box and open it. Then he would take a quick look round—at the aspect of the clouds, the direction of the wind, and so forth; and then, with a nimbleness that any one looking at his rough hands and broad thumbs would have considered impossible, would busk up a weapon of capture that soon showed itself to be deadly enough. And on this last day of Ogilvie's stay at Castle Dare he was unusually lucky—though of course there were one or two heartrending mishaps. As they walked home in the evening—the lowering day had cleared away into a warm sunset, and they could see Colonsay, and Lunga, and the Dutchman lying dark and purple on a golden sea—Ogilvie's said :

"Look here, Macleod—if you would like me to take one of these salmon for Miss White, I could take it as part of my luggage, and have it delivered at once."

"That would be no use," said he, rather gloomily. "She is not in London. She is at Liverpool or Manchester by this time. I have already sent her a present."

Ogilvie did not think fit to ask what; though he had guessed.

"It was a parcel of otter skins," Macleod said. "You see you might present that to any lady—it is merely a curiosity of

MEETING THE STEAMER.

the district—it is no more than if an acquaintance were to give me a chip of quartz he had brought from the Rocky Mountains with a few grains of copper or silver in it."

"It is a present any lady would be glad to have," observed Mr. Ogilvie, with a smile. "Has she got them yet?"

"I do not know," Macleod answered. "Perhaps there is not time for an answer. Perhaps she has forgotten who I am, and is affronted at a stranger sending her a present."

"Forgotten who you are!" Ogilvie exclaimed; and then he looked round, to see that Hamish and Sandy the red-haired were at a convenient distance. "Do you know this, Macleod? A man never yet was in love with a woman without the woman being instantly aware of it."

Macleod glanced at him quickly; then turned away his head again—apparently watching the gulls wheeling high over the sea, black spots against the glow of the sunset.

"That is foolishness," said he. "I had a great care to be quite a stranger to her all the time I was in London. I myself scarcely knew—how could she know? Sometimes I thought I was rude to her, so that I should deceive myself into believing she was only a stranger." Then he remembered one fact, and his downright honesty made him speak again.

"One night, it is true," said he—"it was the last night of my being in London—I asked a flower from her. She gave it to me. She was laughing at the time. That was all."

The sunset had gone away, and the clear northern twilight was fading too, when young Ogilvie, having bade good-bye to Lady Macleod and her niece Janet, got into the broad-beamed boat of the fishermen, accompanied by his friend. There was something of a breeze, and they hoisted a lug-sail so that they should run out to meet the steamer. Donald the piper-lad was not with them; Macleod wanted to speak to his friend Ogilvie as he was leaving.

And yet he did not say anything of importance. He seemed to be chiefly interested in finding out whether Ogilvie could not get a few days' leave about Christmas, that he might come up and try the winter shooting. He was giving minute particulars about the use of arsenic-paste when the box of skins to be

despatched by Hamish reached London. And he was discussing what sort of mounting should be put on a strange old bottle that Janet Macleod had presented to the departing guest. There was no word of that which lay nearest his heart.

And so the black waves rolled by them; and the light at the horizon began to fade; and the stars were coming out one by one; while the two sailors forward (for Macleod was steering) were singing to themselves—

"Fhir a bhata (na horo eile),
Fhir a bhata (na horo eile),
Fhir a bhata (na horo eile),
Chead soire slann leid ge thobh a theid u!"

that is to say—

"O Boatman,
And Boatman,
And Boatman,
A hundred farewells to you wherever you may go!"

And then the lug-sail was hauled down, and they lay on the lapping water; and they could hear all around them the soft callings of the guillemots, and razor-bills, and other divers whose home is the heaving wave. And then the great steamer came up, and slowed; and the boat was hauled alongside, and young Ogilvie sprang up the slippery steps.

"Good-bye, Macleod!"

"Good-bye, Ogilvie! Come up at Christmas!"

The great bulk of the steamer soon floated away; and the lug-sail was run up again, and the boat made slowly back for Castle Dare. "Fhir a bhata!" the men sung; but Macleod scarcely heard them. His last tie with the south had been broken.

But not quite. It was about ten o'clock that night that word came to Castle Dare that John the Post had met with an accident while starting from Kinloch-Scridain; and that his place had been taken by a young lad who had but now arrived with the bag. Macleod hastily looked over the bundle of newspapers, &c., they brought him; and his eager eye fell on an envelope the writing on which made his heart jump.

"Give the lad a half-crown," said he.

And then he went to his own room. He had the letter in his hand; and he knew the hand-writing; but there was no wind of the night that could bring him the mystic message she had sent with it—

"O here is, Glenogie, a letter for thee!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONFIDENCES.

For a second or two he held the letter in his hand, regarding the outside of it; and it was with more deliberation than haste that he opened it. Perhaps it was with some little tremor of fear—lest the first words that should meet his eye might be cruelly cold and distant. What right had he to expect anything else? Many a time in thinking carefully over the past, he had recalled the words—the very tone—in which he had addressed her, and had been dismayed to think of their reserve, which had on one or two occasions almost amounted to austerity. He could expect little beyond a formal acknowledgment of the receiving of his letter and the present that had accompanied it.

Imagine, then, his surprise when he took out from the envelope a number of sheets closely written over in her beautiful, small, neat hand. Hastily his eye ran over the first few lines; and then surprise gave way to a singular feeling of gratitude and joy. Was it indeed she who was writing to him thus? When he had been thinking of her as some one far away and unapproachable—who could have no thought of him or of the too brief time in which he had been near to her—had she indeed been treasuring up some recollection that she now seemed disposed to value?

"You will guess that I am woman enough," she wrote, "to be greatly pleased and flattered by your sending me such a beautiful

present; but you must believe me when I say that its chief value to me was its showing me that I had another friend in the world who was not disposed to forget me the next day after bidding me good-bye. Perhaps you will say that I am cynical; but actresses are accustomed to find the friendships they make—outside the sphere of their own profession—of a singularly temporary character. We are praised and flattered to-day; and forgotten to-morrow. I don't complain. It is only natural. People go away to their own families and home-occupations; why should they remember a person who has amused them for an hour?"

Miss Gertrude White could, when she chose, write a clever and interesting letter—interesting from its very simplicity and frankness; and as Macleod read on and on, he ceased to feel any wonder that this young lady should be placing before him such ample revelations of her experiences and opinions. Indeed, it was more than suggested in this confidential chat that Sir Keith Macleod himself had been the first cause of her having carefully studied her own position and the influence likely to be exerted on her by her present mode of life.

"One meets with the harsher realities of an actress's life," she said, "in the provinces. It is all very fine in London; when such friends as you happen to have are in town; and where there is constant amusement, and pleasant parties, and nice people to meet; and then you have the comforts of your own home around you, and quiet and happy Sundays. But a provincial tour!—the constant travelling, and rehearsals with strange people, and damp lodgings, and miserable hotels, and wet Sundays in smoky towns! Papa is very good and kind, you know; but he is interested in his books, and he goes about all day hunting after curiosities, and he has not a soul to speak to. Then the audiences: I have witnessed one or two scenes lately that would unnerve any one; and of course I have to stand helpless and silent on the stage until the tumult is stilled and the original offenders expelled. Some sailors the other evening amused themselves by clambering down from the top gallery to the pit, hanging on to the gas-brackets and the pillars; and one of them managed to reach the orchestra, jump from the drum on to the stage, and then offered me a glass of whisky

from a big black bottle he had in his hand. When I told papa, he laughed, and said I should be proud of my triumph over the man's imagination. But when the people roared with laughter at my discomfiture, I felt as though I would rather be earning my bread by selling water-cresses in the street or by stitching in a garret."

Of course the cry of the poor injured soul found a ready echo in his heart. It was monstrous that she should be subjected to such indignities. And then that cruel old pagan of a father—was he not ashamed of himself to see the results of his own cold-blooded theories? Was this the glory of art? Was this the reward of the sacrifice of a life—that a sensitive girl should be publicly insulted by a drunken maniac, and jeered at by a brutal crowd? Macleod laid down the letter for a minute or two; and the look on his face was not lovely to see.

"You may think it strange that I should write thus to you," she said; "but if I say that it was yourself who first set me thinking about such things? And since I have been thinking about them, I have had no human being near me to whom I could speak. You know papa's opinions. Even if my dearest friend Mrs. Ross were here, what would she say? She has known me only in London. She thinks it a fine thing to be a popular actress. She sees people ready to pet me in a way—so long as society is pleased to have a little curiosity about me. But she does not see the other side of the picture. She does not even ask how long all this will last. She never thinks of the cares and troubles and downright hard work. If ever you heard me sing, you will know that I have very little of a voice, and that not worth much; but trifling as it is, you would scarcely believe the care and cultivation I have to spend on it, merely for business purposes. Mrs. Ross no doubt sees that it is pleasant enough for a young actress, who is fortunate enough to have won some public favour, to go sailing in a yacht on the Thames, on a summer day, with nice companions around her. She does not see her on a wet day in Newcastle, practising scales for an hour at a stretch, though her throat is half choked with the fog, in a dismal parlour with a piano out of tune, and with the prospect of having to go out through the wet to a rehearsal in

a damp and draughty theatre, with escaped gas added to the fog. That is very nice, isn't it?"

It almost seemed to him—so intense and eager was his involuntary sympathy—as though he himself were breathing fog, and gas, and the foul odours of an empty theatre. He went to the window and threw it open, and sate down there. The stars were no longer quivering white on the black surface of the water, for the moon had risen now in the south, and there was a soft glow all shining over the smooth Atlantic. Sharp and white was the light on the stone walls of Castle Dare, and on the gravelled path, and the rocks, and the trees around; but far away it was a milder radiance that lay over the sea and touched here and there the shores of Inch Kenneth and Ulva and Colonsay. It was a fair and peaceful night, with no sound of human unrest to break the sleep of the world. Sleep, solemn and profound, dwelt over the lonely islands—over Staffa with her resounding caves, and Fladda with her desolate rocks, and Iona with her fairy-white sands, and the distant Dutchman, and Coll, and Tyree, all haunted by the wild sea-birds' cry; and a sleep as deep dwelt over the silent hills, far up under the cold light of the skies. Surely if any poor suffering heart was vexed by the contentions of crowded cities, here, if anywhere in the world, might rest, and peace, and loving solace be found. He sat dreaming there; he had half forgotten the letter.

He roused himself from his reverie; and returned to the light.

"And yet I would not complain of mere discomfort," she continued, "if that were all. People who have to work for their living must not be too particular. What pains me most of all is the effect that this sort of work is having on myself. You would not believe—and I am almost ashamed to confess—how I am worried by small and mean jealousies and anxieties, and how I am tortured by the expression of opinions which all the same I hold in contempt. I reason with myself, to no purpose. It ought to be no concern of mine if some girl in a burlesque makes the house roar by the manner in which she walks up and down the stage, smoking a cigar; and yet I feel angry at the audience for applauding such stuff, and I wince when I see her

praised in the papers. Oh! those papers. I have been making minute inquiries of late; and I find that the usual way in these towns is to let the young literary aspirant who has just joined the office, or the clever compositor who has been promoted to the sub-editor's room, try his hand first of all at reviewing books and then turn him on to dramatic and musical criticism! Occasionally a reporter, who has been round the police-courts to get notes of the night-charges, will drop into the theatre on his way to the office, and 'do a par.,' as they call it. Will you believe it possible that the things written of me by these persons—with their pretentious airs of criticism, and their gross ignorance cropping up at every point—have the power to vex and annoy me most terribly? I laugh at the time; but the phrase rankles in my memory all the same. One learned young man said of me the other day, 'It is really distressing to mark the want of unity in her artistic characterisations when one regards the natural advantages that nature has heaped upon her with no sparing hand.' The natural advantages that nature has heaped upon me! 'And perhaps, also,' he went on to say, 'Miss White would do well to pay some little more attention before venturing on pronouncing the classic names of Greece. Iphigenia herself would not have answered to her name if she had heard it pronounced with the accent on the fourth syllable.'"

Macleod brought his fist down on the table with a bang.

"If I had that fellow," said he aloud, "if I had that fellow, I should like to spin for a shark off Dubh-Artach lighthouse"—and here a most unholy vision rose before him of a new sort of sport: a sailing-launch going about six knots an hour—a goodly rope at the stern with a huge hook through the gill of the luckless critic—a swivel to make him spin—and then a few smart trips up and down by the side of the lonely Dubh-Artach rocks, where Mr. Ewing and his companions occasionally find a few sharks coming up to the surface to stare at them.

"Is it not too ridiculous that such things should vex me—that I should be so absolutely at the mercy of the opinion of people whose judgment I know to be absolutely valueless? I find the same thing all around me. I find a middle-aged man, who knows his work thoroughly, and has seen all the best actors

of the past quarter of a century, will go about quite proudly with a scrap of approval from some newspaper, written by a young man who has never travelled beyond the suburbs of his native town and has seen no acting beyond that of the local company. But there is another sort of critic—the veteran—the man who has worked hard on the paper, and worn himself out—and who is turned off from politics and pensioned by being allowed to display his imbecility in less important matters. Oh, dear, what lessons he reads you! The solemnity of them! Don't you know that at the end of the second act the business of Mrs. So-and-So (some actress who died when George IV. was king) was this, that, or the other? —and how dare you, you impertinent minx, fly in the face of well-known stage traditions? I have been introduced lately to a specimen of both classes. I think the young man—he had beautiful long fair hair and a Byronic collar, and was a little nervous—fell in love with me, for he wrote a furious panegyric about me, and sent it next morning with a bouquet, and begged for my photograph. The elderly gentleman, on the other hand, gave me a great deal of good advice, but I subdued even him, for before he went away he spoke in a broken voice, and there were tears in his eyes—which papa said were owing to a variety of causes. It is ludicrous enough, no doubt; but it is also a little bit humiliating. I try to laugh the thing away, whether the opinion expressed about me is solemnly stupid or merely impertinent, but the vexation of it remains, and the chief vexation to me is that I should have so little command over myself, so little respect for myself, as to suffer myself to be vexed. But how can one help it? Public opinion is the very breath and life of a theatre and of every one connected with it; and you come to attach importance to the most foolish expression of opinion in the most obscure print.

"And so, my dear friend, I have had my grumble out—and made my confession too, for I should not like to let every one know how foolish I am about these petty vexations—and you will see that I have not forgotten what you said to me, and that further reflection and experience have only confirmed it. But I must warn you. Now that I have victimised you to this fearful extent, and liberated my mind, I feel much more comfortable.

As I write there is a blue colour coming into the windows that tells me the new day is coming. Would it surprise you if the new day brought a complete new set of feelings? I have begun to doubt whether I have got any opinions—whether, having to be so many different people in the course of a week, I have any clear notion as to what I myself am. One thing is certain, that I have been greatly vexed and worried of late by a succession of the merest trifles; and when I got your kind letter and present this evening, I suddenly thought, Now for a complete confession, and protest. I know you will forgive me for having victimised you; and that, as soon as you have thrown this rambling epistle into the fire, you will try to forget all the nonsense it contains, and will believe that I hope always to remain

"Your friend,

"GERTRUDE WHITE."

His quick and warm sympathy refused to believe the half of this letter. It was only because she knew what was owing to the honour and self-respect of a true woman that she spoke in this tone of bitter and scornful depreciation of herself. It was clear that she was longing for the dignity and independence of a more natural way of life. And this revelation—that she was not after all banished for ever into that cold region of art in which her father would fain keep her—somewhat bewildered him at first. The victim might be reclaimed from the altar and restored to the sphere of simple human affections, natural duties, and peaceful ways. And if he——?

Suddenly, and with a shock of delight that made his heart throb, he tried to picture this beautiful fair creature sitting over there in that very chair, by the side of the fire, her head bent down over her sewing, the warm light of the lamp touching the tender curve of her cheek. And when she lifted her head to speak to him—and when her large and lambent eyes met his—surely Fionaghal the fair poetess from strange lands never spoke in softer tones than this other beautiful stranger, who had become his wife and his heart's companion. And now he will bid her lay aside her work; and he will get a white shawl for her; and

like a ghost she will steal out with him into the moonlight air. And is there enough wind on this summer night to take them out from the sombre shore to the open plain of the sea? Look now, as the land recedes, at the high walls of Castle Dare, over the black cliffs, and against the stars. Far away they see the graveyard of Inch Kenneth, the stones pale in the moonlight. And what song will she sing now, that Ulva and Colonsay may awake and fancy that some mermaiden is singing to bewail her lost lover? The night is sad—and the song is sad—and then, somehow, he finds himself alone in this waste of water—and all the shores of the islands are silent and devoid of life—and there is only the echo of the sad singing in his ears——

He jumps to his feet; for there is a knocking at the door. The gentle cousin Janet enters; and hastily he thrusts that letter into his pocket, while his face blushes hotly.

"Where have you been, Keith?" she says, in her quiet kindly way. "Auntie would like to say good-night to you now."

"I will come directly," said he.

"And now that Norman Ogilvie is away, Keith," said she, "you will take more rest about the shooting; for you have not been looking like yourself at all lately; and you know, Keith, when you are not well and happy, it is no one at all about Dare that is happy either. And that is why you will take care of yourself."

He glanced at her rather uneasily; but he said in a light and careless way—

"Oh, I have been well enough, Janet, except that I was not sleeping well one or two nights. And if you look after me like that, you will make me think I am a baby, and you will send me some warm flannels when I go up on the hills."

"It is too proud of your hardihood you are, Keith," said his cousin, with a smile. "But there never was a man of your family who would take any advice."

"I would take any advice from you, Janet," said he; and therewith he followed her to bid good-night to the silver-haired mother.



CASTLE DARE.

CHAPTER XIX.

A RESOLVE.

He slept but little that night; and early the next morning he was up and out and away by himself—paying but little heed to the rushing blue seas, and the white gulls, and the sunshine touching the far sands on the shores of Iona. He was in a fever of unrest. He knew not what to make of that letter; it might mean anything or nothing. Alternations of wild hope and cold despair succeeded each other. Surely it was unusual for a girl so to reveal her innermost confidences to any one whom she considered a stranger? To him alone had she told this story of her private troubles. Was it not in effect asking for a sympathy which she could not hope for from any other? Was it not establishing a certain secret between them? Her own father did not know. Her sister was too young to be told. Friends like Mrs. Ross could not understand why this young and beautiful actress, the favourite of the public, could be dissatisfied with her lot. It was to him alone she had appealed.

And then again he read the letter. The very frankness of it made him fear. There was none of the shyness of a girl writing to one who might be her lover. She might have written thus to one of her school-companions. He eagerly searched it for some phrase of tenderer meaning; but no—there was a careless abandonment about it, as if she had been talking without thinking of the person she addressed. She had even joked about a young man falling in love with her. It was a matter of perfect indifference to her. It was ludicrous as the shape of the lad's collar was ludicrous—but of no more importance. And thus she receded from his imagination again; and became a thing apart—the white slave bound in those cruel chains that seemed to all but herself and him the badges of triumph.

Herself and him—the conjunction set his heart throbbing quickly. He eagerly bethought himself how this secret understanding could be strengthened if only he might see her and

speak to her. He could tell by her eyes what she meant, whatever her words might be. *If only he could see her again*:—all his wild hopes, and fears, and doubts—all his vague fancies and imaginings—began to narrow themselves down to this one point; and this immediate desire became all-consuming. He grew sick at heart when he looked round and considered how vain was the wish.

The gladness had gone from the face of Keith Macleod. Not many months before any one would have imagined that the life of this handsome young fellow, whose strength and courage and high spirits seemed to render him insensible to any obstacle, had everything in it that the mind of man could desire. He had a hundred interests and activities; he had youth, and health, and a comely presence; he was on good terms with everybody around him—for he had a smile and a cheerful word for each one he met, gentle or simple. All this gay, glad life seemed to have fled. The watchful Hamish was the first to notice that his master began to take less and less interest in the shooting and boating and fishing; and at times the old man was surprised and disturbed by an exhibition of querulous impatience that had certainly never before been one of Macleod's failings. Then his cousin Janet saw that he was silent and absorbed; and his mother inquired once or twice why he did not ask one or other of his neighbours to come over to Dare to have a day's shooting with him.

"I think you are finding the place lonely, Keith, now that Norman Ogilvie is gone," said she.

"Ah, mother," he said with a laugh, "it is not Norman Ogilvie, it is London, that has poisoned my mind. I should never have gone to the south. I am hungering for the flesh-pots of Egypt already; and I am afraid some day I will have to come and ask you to let me go away again."

He spoke jestingly, and yet he was regarding his mother.

"I know it is not pleasant for a young man to be kept fretting at home," said she. "But it is not long now I will ask you to do that, Keith."

Of course this brief speech only drove him into more vigorous demonstration that he was not fretting at all; and for a time he

seemed more engrossed than ever in all the occupations he had but recently abandoned. But whether he was on the hill-side, or down in the glen, or out among the islands—or whether he was trying to satisfy the hunger of his heart with books, long after every one in Castle Dare had gone to bed—he could not escape from this gnawing and torturing anxiety. It was no beautiful and gentle sentiment that possessed him—a pretty thing to dream about during a summer's morning—but on the contrary a burning fever of unrest that left him peace nor day nor night. "Sudden love is followed by sudden hate," says the Gaelic proverb; but there had been no suddenness at all about this passion that had stealthily got hold of him; and he had ceased even to hope that it might abate or depart altogether. He had to "dree his weird." And when he read in books about the joy and delight that accompany the awakening of love—how the world suddenly becomes fair, and the very skies are bluer than their wont—he wondered whether he was different from other human beings. The joy and the delights of love? He knew only a sick hunger of the heart and a continual and brooding despair.

One morning he was going along the cliffs, his only companion being the old black retriever, when sudden he saw, far away below him, the figure of a lady. For a second his heart stood still at the sight of this stranger; for he knew it was neither the mother nor Janêt; and she was coming along a bit of greensward from which, by dint of much climbing, she might have reached Castle Dare. But as he watched her, he caught sight of some other figures, further below on the rocks. And then he perceived—as he saw her return with a handful of bell-heather—that this party had come from Iona, or Bunessan, or some such place, to explore one of the great caves on the coast, while this lady had wandered away from them in search of some wild-flowers. By and by he saw the small boat, with its sprit-sail white in the sun, go away towards the south, and the lonely coast was left as lonely as before.

But ever after that he grew to wonder what Gertrude White, if ever she could be persuaded to visit his home, would think of this thing and of that thing—what flowers she would gather—

whether she would listen to Hamish's stories of the fairies—whether she would be interested in her small countryman, Johnny Wickes, who now wore the kilt, with his face and legs as brown as a berry—whether the favourable heavens would send her sunlight and blue skies, and the moonlight nights reveal to her the solemn glory of the sea and the lonely islands. Would she take his hand to steady herself in passing over the slippery rocks? What would she say if suddenly she saw above her—by the opening of a cloud—a stag standing high on a crag near the summit of Ben-an-Sloich? And what would the mother and Janet say to that singing of hers, if they were to hear her put all the tenderness of the low, sweet voice into "Wae's me for Prince Charlie"?

There was one secret nook that more than any other he associated with her presence; and thither he would go when his heart-sickness seemed too grievous to be borne. It was down in a glen beyond the fir-wood; and here the ordinary desolation of this bleak coast ceased, for there were plenty of young larches on the sides of the glen, with a tall silver birch or two; while down in the hollow there were clumps of alders by the side of the brawling stream. And this dell that he sought was hidden away from sight, with the sun but partially breaking through the alders and rowans, and bespeckling the great grey boulders by the side of the burn, many of which were covered by the softest of the olive-green moss. Here, too, the brook that had been broken just above by intercepting stones, swept clearly and limpidly over a bed of smooth rock; and in the golden-brown water the trout lay, and scarcely moved until some motion of his hand made them shoot up stream with a lightning speed. And then the wild flowers around—the purple ling and red bell-heather growing on the silver-grey rocks; a foxglove or two towering high above the golden-green breckans; the red star of a crane's-bill among the velvet moss. Even if she were over-awed by the solitariness of the Atlantic and the gloom of the tall cliffs and their yawning caves, surely here would be a haven of peace and rest, with sunshine, and flowers, and the pleasant murmur of the stream. What did it say, then, as one sat and listened in the silence? When the fair poetess from strange

lands came among the Macleods, did she seek out this still retreat, and listen, and listen, and listen until she caught the music of this monotonous murmur, and sang it to her harp? And was it not all a song about the passing away of life, and how that summer days were for the young, and how the world was beautiful for lovers? "O children!" it seemed to say, "why should you waste your lives in vain endeavour, while the winter is coming quick, and the black snow-storms, and a roaring of wind from the sea? Here I have flowers for you, and beautiful sunlight, and the peace of summer days. Time passes —time passes—time passes—and you are growing old. While as yet the heart is warm and the eye is bright, here are summer flowers for you, and a silence fit for the mingling of lovers' speech. If you listen not, I laugh at you and go my way. But the winter is coming fast."

Far away in these grimy towns, fighting with mean cares and petty jealousies, dissatisfied, despondent, careless as to the future, how could this message reach her to fill her heart with the singing of a bird? He dared not send it, at all events. But he wrote to her. And the bitter travail of the writing of that letter he long remembered. He was bound to give her his sympathy, and to make light as well as he could of those very evils which he had been the first to reveal to her. He tried to write in as frank and friendly a spirit as she had done; the letter was quite cheerful.

"Did you know," said he, "that once upon a time the Chief of the Macleods married a fairy? And whether Macleod did not treat her well; or whether the fairy-folk reclaimed her; or whether she grew tired of the place, I do not know quite; but at all events they were separated, and she went away to her own people. And before she went away she gave to Macleod a fairy banner—the *Bratach sith* it is known as—and she told him that if ever he was in great peril, or had any great desire, he was to wave that flag, and whatever he desired would come to pass; but the virtue of the *Bratach sith* would depart after it had been waved three times. Now the small green banner has been waved only twice; and each time it has saved the clan from a great danger; and it is still preserved in the castle

of Dunvegan, with power to work one more miracle on behalf of the Macleods. And if I had the fairy flag, do you know what I would do with it? I would take it in my hand, and say, '*I desire the fairy people to remove my friend Gertrude White from all the evil influences that disturb and distress her. I desire them to heal her wounded spirit, and secure for her everything that may tend to her life-long happiness. And I desire that all the theatres in the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland—with all their musical instruments, lime-light, and painted scenes—may be taken and dropped into the ocean, midway between the islands of Ulva and Coll, so that the fairy-folk may amuse themselves in them if they will so please.*' Would not that be a very nice form of incantation? We are very strong believers here in the power of one person to damage another in absence; and when you can kill a man by sticking pins into a waxen image of him—which everybody knows to be true—surely you ought to be able to help a friend, especially with the aid of the *Bratach sith.* Imagine Covent Garden Theatre a hundred fathoms down in the deep sea, with mermaidens playing the brass instruments in the orchestra, and the fairy-folk on the stage, and seals disporting themselves in the stalls, and guillemots shooting about the upper galleries in pursuit of fish. But we should get no peace from Iona. The fairies there are very pious people. They used to carry St. Columba about when he got tired. They would be sure to demand the shutting up of all the theatres, and the destruction of the brass instruments. And I don't see how we could reasonably object."

It was a cruel sort of jesting; but how otherwise than as a jest could he convey to her, an actress, his wish that all theatres were at the bottom of the sea? For a brief time that letter seemed to establish some link of communication between him and her. He followed it on its travels by sea and land. He thought of its reaching the house in which she dwelt—perhaps some plain and grimy building in a great manufacturing city, or perhaps a small quiet cottage up by Regent's Park half hidden by the golden leaves of October. Might she not, moreover, after she had opened it and read it, be moved by some passing whim to answer it, though it demanded no answer? He waited for a week, and

there was no word or message from the south. She was far away, and silent. And the hills grew lonelier than before; and the sickness of his heart increased.

This state of his mind could not last. His longing and impatience and unrest became more than he could bear. It was in vain that he tried to satisfy his imaginative craving with these idle visions of her: it was she herself he must see; and he set about devising all manner of wild excuses for one last visit to the south. But the more he considered these various projects, the more ashamed he grew in thinking of his taking any one of them and placing it before the beautiful old dame who reigned in Castle Dare. He had barely been three months at home: how could he explain to her this sudden desire to go away again?

One morning his cousin Janet came to him.

"O Keith!" said she, "the whole house is in commotion; and Hamish is for murdering some of the lads; and there is no one would dare to bring the news to you. The two young buzzards have escaped."

"I know it," he said. "I let them out myself."

"You!" she exclaimed in surprise; for she knew the great interest he had shown in watching the habits of the young hawks that had been captured by a shepherd lad.

"Yes. I let them out last night. It was a pity to have them caged up."

"So long as it was yourself, it is all right," she said; and then she was going away. But she paused, and turned, and said to him, with a smile, "And I think you should let yourself escape, too, Keith; for it is you, too, that are caged up; and perhaps you feel it now more since you have been to London. And if you are thinking of your friends in London, why should you not go for another visit to the south, before you settle down to the long winter?"

For an instant he regarded her with some fear. Had she guessed his secret? Had she been watching the outward signs of this constant torture he had been suffering? Had she surmised that the otter-skins about which he had asked her advice were not consigned to any one of the married ladies whose acquaintance he had made in the south and of whom he had chatted freely

enough in Castle Dare? Or was this merely a passing suggestion thrown out by one who was always on the look-out to do a kindness?

"Well, I would like to go, Janet," he said, but with no gladness in his voice, "and it is not more than a week or two I should like to be away; but I do not think the mother would like it; and it is enough money I have spent this year already——"

"There is no concern about the money, Keith," said she simply, "since you have not touched what I gave you. And if you are set upon it, you know auntie will agree to whatever you wish."

"But how can I explain to her? It is unreasonable to be going away."

How, indeed, could he explain? He was almost assuming that those gentle eyes now fixed on him could read his heart; and that she would come to aid him in his suffering without any further speech from him. And that was precisely what Janet Macleod did—whether or not she had guessed the cause of his desire to get away.

"If you were a schoolboy, Keith, you would be cleverer at making an excuse for playing truant," she said laughing. "And I could make one for you now."

"You?"

"I will not call it an excuse, Keith," she said, "because I think you would be doing a good work; and I will bear the expense of it, if you please."

He looked more puzzled than ever.

"When we were at Salen yesterday I saw Major Stuart, and he has just come back from Dunrobin. And he was saying very great things about the machine for the drying of crops in wet weather, and he said he would like to go to England to see the newer ones and all the later improvements, if there was a chance of any one about here going shares with him. Now it would not be very much, Keith, if you were to share with him; and the machine can be moved about very well; and in the bad weather you could give the crofters some help, to say nothing about our own hay and corn. And that is what Major Stuart

was saying yesterday, that if there was any place that you wanted a drying machine for the crops, it was in Mull."

"I have been thinking of it myself," he said, absently, "but our farm is too small to make it pay——"

"But if Major Stuart will take half the expense? And even if you lost a little, Keith, you would save a great deal to the poorer people, who are continually losing their little patches of crops. Now will you be my agent, Keith, to go and see whether it is practicable?"

"They will not thank you, Janet, for letting them have this help for nothing."

"They shall not have it for nothing," said she—for she had plenty of experience in dealing with the poorer folk around—"they must pay for the fuel that is used. And now, Keith, if it is a holiday you want, will not that be a very good holiday—and one to be used for a good purpose too?"

She left him. Where was the eager joy with which he ought to have accepted this offer? Here was the very means placed within his reach of satisfying the craving desire of his heart: and yet, all the same, he seemed to shrink back with a vague and undefined dread. A thousand impalpable fears and doubts beset his mind. He had grown timid as a woman. The old happy audacity had been destroyed by sleepless nights and a torturing anxiety. It was a new thing for Keith Macleod to have become a prey to strange unintelligible forebodings.

But he went and saw Major Stuart—a round, red, jolly little man, with white hair, and a cheerful smile, who had a sombre and melancholy wife. Major Stuart received Macleod's offer with great gravity. It was a matter of business that demanded serious consideration. He had worked out the whole system of drying crops with hot air as it was shown him in pamphlets, reports, and agricultural journals; and he had come to the conclusion that—on paper at least—it could be made to pay. What was wanted was to give the thing a practical trial. If the system was sound, surely any one who helped to introduce it into the western Highlands was doing a very good work indeed. And there was nothing but personal inspection could decide on the various merits of the latest improvements.

This was what he said before his wife, one night at dinner. But when the ladies had left the room, the little stout Major suddenly put up both his hands, snapped his thumb and middle finger, and very cleverly executed one or two reel steps.

"By George! my boy," said he with a ferocious grin on his face, "I think we will have a little frolic—a little frolic—a little frolic! You were never shut up in a house for six months with a woman like my wife—were you, Macleod? You were never reminded of your coffin every morning, were you? Macleod, my boy, I am just wild to get after those drying machines!"

And indeed Macleod could not have had a merrier companion to go south with him than this rubicund Major just escaped from the thraldom of his wife. But it was with no such high spirits that Macleod set out. Perhaps it was only the want of sleep that had rendered him nerveless and morbid; but he felt as he left Castle Dare, and as again he went out to meet the great steamer coming over the sea, that there was a lie in his actions if not in his words. And as for the future that lay before him, it was a region only of doubt, and vague regrets, and unknown fears; and he was entering upon it without any glimpse of light and without the guidance of any friendly hand.

CHAPTER XX.

OTTER-SKINS.

"Ah, papa," said Miss Gertrude White—and she pretended to sigh as she spoke—"this is a change indeed."

They were driving up to the gate of the small cottage in South Bank. It was the end of October. In the gardens they passed the trees were almost bare, though such leaves as hung sparsely on the branches of the chestnuts and maples were ablaze with russet and gold in the misty sunshine.

"In another week," she continued, "there will not be a leaf

left. I dare say there is not a single geranium in the garden. All hands on deck to pipe a farewell!—

Ihr Matten, lebt wohl,
Ihr sonnigen Weiden!
Der Senne muss scheiden,
Der Sommer ist hin.

"Farewell to the blue mountains of Newcastle, and the sunlit valleys of Liverpool, and the silver waterfalls of Leeds; the summer is indeed over; and a very nice and pleasant summer we have had it."

The flavour of sarcasm running through this affected sadness vexed Mr. White, and he answered sharply—

"I think you have little reason to grumble over a tour which has so distinctly added to your reputation."

"I was not aware," said she, with a certain careless sauciness of manner, "that an actress was allowed to have a reputation—at least, there are always plenty of people anxious enough to take it away."

"Gertrude," said he sternly, "what do you mean by this constant carping? Do you wish to cease to be an actress? or, what in all the world do you want?"

"To cease to be an actress?" she said with a mild wonder, and with the sweetest of smiles, as she prepared to get out of the open door of the brougham. "Why, don't you know, papa, that a leopard cannot change his spots, or an Ethiopian his skin? Take care of the step, dear. That's right. Come here, Marie, and give James a hand with this portmanteau."

Miss White was not grumbling at all—but on the contrary was quite pleasant and cheerful—when she entered the small house and found herself once more at home.

"Oh, Carry," she said, when her sister followed her into her room, "you don't know what it is to get back home after having been bandied from one hotel to another hotel, and from one lodging-house to another lodging-house, for goodness knows how long."

"Oh, indeed," said Miss Carry, with such marked coldness that her sister turned to her.

"What is the matter with you?"

"What is the matter with *you?*" the younger sister retorted, with sudden fire. "Do you know that your letters to me have been quite disgraceful?"

"You are crazed, child—you wrote something about it the other day—I could not make out what you meant," said Miss White; and she went to the glass to see that the beautiful brown hair had not been too much disarranged by the removal of her bonnet.

"It is you are crazed, Gertrude White," said Carry, who had apparently picked up from some melodrama the notion that it was rather effective to address a person by her full name; "I am really ashamed of you—that you should have let yourself be bewitched by a parcel of beasts' skins. I declare that your ravings about the Highlands, and fairies, and trash of that sort have been only fit for a penny journal——"

Miss White turned and stared—as well she might. This indignant person of fourteen had flashing eyes and a visage of wrath. The pale, calm, elder sister only remarked, in that deep-toned and gentle voice of hers—

"Your language is pretty considerably strong, Carry. I don't know what has aroused such a passion in you. Because I wrote to you about the Highlands? Because I sent you that collection of legends? Because it seemed to me when I was in a wretched hotel in some dirty town, I would rather be away yachting or driving with some one of the various parties of people whom I know, and who had mostly gone to Scotland this year? If you are jealous of the Highlands, Carry, I will undertake to root out the name of every mountain and lake that has got hold of my affections."

She was turning away again, with a quiet smile on her face, when her younger sister arrested her.

"What's that?" said she, so sharply, and extending her forefinger so suddenly, that Gertrude almost shrank back.

"What's what?" she said in dismay—fearing perhaps to hear of an adder being on her shoulder.

"You know perfectly well," said Miss Carry, vehemently, "it is the Macleod tartan!"

Now the truth was that Miss White's travelling dress was of an unrelieved grey; the only scrap of colour about her costume being a tiny thread of tartan ribbon that just showed in front of her collar.

"The Macleod tartan?" said the elder sister, demurely. "And what if it were the Macleod tartan?"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Gerty! There was quite enough occasion for people to talk in the way he kept coming here—and now you make a parade of it—you ask people to look at you wearing a badge of servitude—you say, 'Oh, here I am; and I am quite ready to be your wife when you ask me, Sir Keith Macleod!'"

There was no flush of anger in the fair and placid face; but rather a look of demure amusement in the downcast eyes.

"Dear me, Carry," said she with great innocence, "the profession of an actress must be looking up in public estimation when such a rumour as that could even get into existence. And so people have been so kind as to suggest that Sir Keith Macleod, the representative of one of the oldest and proudest families in the kingdom, would not be above marrying a poor actress who has her living to earn, and who is supported by the half-crowns and half-sovereigns of the public? And indeed I think it would look very well to have him loitering about the stage-doors of provincial theatres until his wife should be ready to come out; and would he bring his gillies, and keepers, and head-foresters, and put them into the pit to applaud her? Really, the *rôle* you have cut out for a Highland gentleman—"

"A Highland gentleman!" exclaimed Carry. "A Highland pauper! But you are quite right, Gerty, to laugh at the rumour. Of course it is quite ridiculous. It is quite ridiculous to think that an actress whose fame is all over England—who is sought after by everybody, and the popularest favourite ever seen—would give up everything and go away and marry an ignorant Highland savage, and look after his calves and his cows and hens for him. That is indeed ridiculous, Gerty."

"Very well, then, put it out of your mind, and never let me hear another word about it," said the popularest favourite, as she undid the bit of tartan ribbon, "and if it is any great

comfort to you to know, this is not the Macleod tartan, but the MacDougal tartan, and you may put it in the fire if you like."

Saying which, she threw on the table the bit of costume which had given so great offence. The discomfited Carry looked at it, but would not touch it. At last she said—

"Where are the skins, Gerty?"

"Near Castle Dare," answered Miss White, turning to get something else for her neck, "there is a steep hill, and the road comes over it. When you climb to the top of the hill and sit down, the fairies will carry you right to the bottom, if you are in a proper frame of mind. But they won't appear at all unless you are at peace with all men. I will show the skins when you are in a proper frame of mind, Carry."

"Who told you that story?" she asked quickly.

"Sir Keith Macleod," the elder sister said without thinking.

"Then he has been writing to you?"

"Certainly."

She marched out of the room. Gertrude White, unconscious of the fierce rage she had aroused, carelessly proceeded with her toilette, trying now one flower and now another in the ripples of her sun-brown hair, but finally discarding these half-withered things for a narrow band of blue velvet.

"Threescore of nobles rode up the king's ha',"

she was humming thoughtlessly to herself as she stood with her hands uplifted to her head, revealing the beautiful lines of her figure,

"But bonnie Glenogie's the flower o' them a';
Wi' his milk-white steed and his coal-black e'e:
Glenogie, dear mither, Glenogie for me!"

At length she had finished, and was ready to proceed to her immediate work of overhauling domestic affairs. When Keith Macleod was struck by the exceeding neatness and perfection of arrangement in this small house, he was in nowise the victim of any stage-effect. Gertrude White was at all times and in all seasons a precise and accurate house-mistress. Harassed,

as an actress must often be, by other cares; sometimes exhausted with hard work; perhaps tempted now and again by the self-satisfaction of a splendid triumph to let meaner concerns go unheeded; all the same she allowed nothing to interfere with her domestic duties.

"Gerty," her father said impatiently to her a day or two before they left London for the provinces, "what is the use of your going down to those stores yourself? Surely you can send Jane or Marie. You really waste far too much time over the veriest trifles: how can it matter what sort of mustard we have?"

"And, indeed, I am glad to have something to convince me that I am a human being and a woman," she had said instantly, "something to be myself in. I believe Providence intended me to be the manager of a Swiss hotel."

This was one of the first occasions on which she had revealed to her father that she had been thinking a good deal about her lot in life, and was perhaps beginning to doubt whether the struggle to become a great and famous actress was the only thing worth living for. But he paid little attention to it at the time. He had a vague impression that it was scarcely worth discussing. He was pretty well convinced that his daughter was clever enough to argue herself into any sort of belief about herself, if she should take some fantastic notion into her head. It was not until that night in Manchester that he began to fear there might be something serious in these expressions of discontent.

On this bright October morning Miss Gertrude White was about to begin her domestic inquiries, and was leaving her room humming cheerfully to herself something about the bonnie Glenogie of the song, when she was again stopped by her sister, who was carrying a bundle.

"I have got the skins," she said, gloomily. "Jane took them out."

"Will you look at them?" the sister said kindly. "They are very pretty. If they were not a present, I would give them to you, to make a jacket of them."

"*I* wear them?" said she. "Not likely!"

Nevertheless she had sufficient womanly curiosity to let her

elder sister open the parcel; and then she took up the otter-skins one by one, and looked at them.

"I don't think much of them," she said.

The other bore this taunt patiently.

"They are only big moles, aren't they? And I thought mole-skin was only worn by working people."

"I am a working person too," Miss Gertrude White said, "but in any case I think a jacket of these skins will look lovely."

"Oh, do you think so? Well, you can't say much for the smell of them."

"It is no more disagreeable than the smell of a seal-skin jacket."

She laid down the last of the skins with some air of disdain.

"It will be a nice series of trophies, any way—showing you know some one who goes about spending his life in killing inoffensive animals."

"Poor Sir Keith Macleod! What has he done to offend you, Carry?"

Miss Carry turned her head away for a minute; but presently she boldly faced her sister.

"Gerty, you don't mean to marry a beauty man?"

Gerty looked considerably puzzled; but her companion continued vehemently—

"How often have I heard you say you would never marry a beauty man—a man who has been brought up in front of the looking-glass—who is far too well satisfied with his own good looks to think of anything or anybody else! Again and again you have said that, Gertrude White. You told me, rather than marry a self-satisfied coxcomb, you would marry a misshapen, ugly little man, so that he would worship you all the days of your life for your condescension and kindness."

"Very well, then!"

"And what is Sir Keith Macleod but a beauty man?"

"He is not!" and for once the elder sister betrayed some feeling in the proud tone of her voice. "He is the manliest-looking man that I have ever seen; and I have seen a good many more men than you. There is not a man you know whom

he could not throw across the canal down there. Sir Keith Macleod a beauty man!—I think he could take on a good deal more polishing, and curling, and smoothing without any great harm. If I was in any danger, I know which of all the men I have seen I would rather have in front of me—with his arms free; and I don't suppose he would be thinking of any looking-glass! If you want to know about the race he represents, read English history, and the story of England's wars. If you go to India, or China, or Africa, or the Crimea, you will hear something about the Macleods, I think!"

Carry began to cry.

"You silly thing, what is the matter with you?" Gertrude White exclaimed; but of course her arm was round her sister's neck.

"It is true, then."

"What is true?"

"What people say."

"What do people say?"

"That you will marry Sir Keith Macleod."

"Carry!" she said angrily, "I can't imagine who has been repeating such idiotic stories to you. I wish people would mind their own business. Sir Keith Macleod marry me!—"

"Do you mean to say he has never asked you?" Carry said, disengaging herself, and fixing her eyes on her sister's face.

"Certainly not!" was the decided answer; but all the same Miss Gertrude White's forehead and cheeks flushed slightly.

"Then you know that he means to—and that is why you have been writing to me, day after day, about the romance of the Highlands, and fairy stories, and the pleasure of people who could live without caring for the public. Oh, Gerty, why won't you be frank with me and let me know the worst at once?"

"If I gave you a box on the ears," she said, laughing, "that would be the worst at once; and I think it would serve you right for listening to such tittle-tattle and letting your head be filled with nonsense. Haven't you sufficient sense to know that you ought not to compel me to speak of such a thing—absurd as it is? I cannot go on denying that I am about to become the wife of Tom, Dick, or Harry; and you know the stories

that have been going about for years past. Who was I last? The wife of a Russian nobleman who gambled away all my earnings at Homburg. You are fourteen now, Carry; you should have more sense."

Miss Carry dried her eyes; but she mournfully shook her head. There were the otter-skins lying on the table. She had seen plenty of the absurd paragraphs about her sister which good-natured friends had cut out of provincial and foreign papers and forwarded to the small family at South Bank. But the mythical Russian nobleman had never sent a parcel of otter-skins. These were palpable and not to be explained away. She sorrowfully left the room, unconvinced.

And now Miss Gertrude White set to work with a will; and no one who was only familiar with her outside her own house would have recognised in this shifty, practical, industrious person, who went so thoroughly into all the details of the small establishment, the lady who, when she went abroad among the gaieties of the London season, was so eagerly sought after, and flattered, and petted, and made the object of all manner of delicate attentions. Her father, who suspected that her increased devotion to these domestic duties was but part of that rebellious spirit she had recently betrayed, had nevertheless to confess that there was no one but herself whom he could trust to arrange his china and dust his curiosities. And how could he resent her giving instructions to the cook, when it was his own dinner that profited thereby?

"Well, Gerty," he said that evening after dinner, "what do you think about Mr. ——'s offer? It is very good-natured of him to let you have the ordering of the drawing-room scene; for you can have the furniture and the colour to suit your own costume."

"Indeed I shall have nothing whatever to do with it," said she promptly. "The furniture at home is enough for me. I don't wish to become the upholsterer of a theatre."

"You are very ungrateful then. Half the effect of a modern comedy is lost because the people appear in rooms which resemble nothing at all that people ever lived in. Here is a man who gives you *carte blanche* to put a modern drawing-room on the

stage; and your part would gain infinitely from having real surroundings. I consider it a very flattering offer."

"And perhaps it is, papa," said she, "but I think I do enough if I get through my own share of the work. And it is very silly of him to want me to introduce a song into this part too. He knows I can't sing——"

"Gerty!" her sister said.

"Oh, you know as well as I. I can get through a song well enough in a room; but I have not enough voice for a theatre; and although he says it is only to make the drawing-room scene more realistic—and that I need not sing to the front—that is all nonsense. I know what it is meant for—to catch the gallery. Now I refuse to sing for the gallery."

This was decided enough.

"What was the song you put into your last part, Gerty?" her sister asked. "I saw something in the papers about it."

"It was a Scotch one, Carry; I don't think you know it."

"I wonder it was not a Highland one," her sister said rather spitefully.

"Oh, I have a whole collection of Highland ones now—would you like to hear one? Would you, papa?"

She went and fetched the book, and opened the piano.

"It is an old air that belonged to Scarba," she said, and then she sang, simply and pathetically enough, the somewhat stiff and cumbrous English translation of the Gaelic words. It was the song of the exiled Mary Macleod, who, sitting on the shores of "seaworn Mull," looks abroad on the lonely islands of Scarba, and Islay, and Jura, and laments that she is far away from her own home.

"How do you like it, papa?" she said, when she had finished. "It is a pity I do not know Gaelic. They say that when the chief heard these verses repeated, he let the old woman go back to her own home."

One of the two listeners, at all events, did not seem to be particularly struck by the pathos of Mary Macleod's lament. She walked up to the piano.

"Where did you get that book, Gerty?" she said in a firm voice.

"Where?" said the other, innocently. "In Manchester, I think it was I bought it."

But before she had made the explanation, Miss Carry, convinced that this, too, had come from her enemy, had seized the book and turned to the title-page. Neither on title-page nor on fly-leaf, however, was there any inscription.

"Did you think it had come with the otter-skins, Carry?" the elder sister said, laughing; and the younger one retired, baffled and chagrined, but none the less resolved that before Gertrude White completely gave herself up to this blind infatuation for a savage country and for one of its worthless inhabitants, she would have to run the gauntlet of many a sharp word of warning and reproach.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN LONDON AGAIN.

On through the sleeping counties rushed the train—passing woods, streams, fertile valleys, and clustering villages all palely shrouded in the faint morning mist that had a sort of suffused and hidden sunlight in it: the world had not yet awoke. But Macleod knew that, ere he reached London, people would be abroad; and he almost shrank from meeting the look of those thousands of eager faces. Would not some of them guess his errand? Would he not be sure to run against a friend of hers—an acquaintance of his own? It was with a strange sense of fear that he stepped out and on to the platform at Euston Station; he glanced up and down: if she were suddenly to confront his eyes! A day or two ago it seemed as if innumerable leagues of ocean lay between him and her, so that the heart grew sick with thinking of the distance; now that he was in the same town with her he felt so close to her that he could almost hear her breathe.

Major Stewart had enjoyed a sound night's rest, and was now possessed of quite enough good spirits and loquacity for two. He scarcely observed the silence of his companion. Together they rattled away through this busy, eager, immense throng, until they got down to the comparative quiet of Bury Street; and here they were fortunate enough to find not only that Macleod's old rooms were unoccupied, but that his companion could have the corresponding chambers on the floor above. They changed their attire; had breakfast; and then proceeded to discuss their plans for the day. Major Stewart observed that he was in no hurry to investigate the last modifications of the drying machines. It would be necessary to write and appoint an interview before going down into Essex. He had several calls to make in London; if Macleod did not see him before, they should meet at seven for dinner. Macleod saw him depart without any great regret.

When he himself went outside it was already noon, but the sun had not yet broken through the mist, and London seemed cold, and lifeless, and deserted. He did not know of any one of his former friends being left in the great and lonely city. He walked along Piccadilly, and saw how many of the houses were shut up. The beautiful foliage of Green Park had vanished; here and there a red leaf hung on a withered branch. And yet, lonely as he felt in walking through this crowd of strangers, he was nevertheless possessed with a nervous and excited fear that at any moment he might have to quail before the inquiring glance of a certain pair of calm, large eyes. Was this, then, really Keith Macleod who was haunted by these fantastic troubles? Had he so little courage that he dared not go boldly up to her house, and hold out his hand to her? As he walked along this thoroughfare, he was looking far ahead; and when any tall and slender figure appeared that might by any possibility be taken for hers, he watched it with a nervous interest that had something of dread in it. So much for the high courage born of love!

It was with some sense of relief that he entered Hyde Park, for here there were fewer people. And as he walked on, the day brightened. A warmer light began to suffuse the pale mist

lying over the black-green masses of rhododendrons, the leafless trees, the damp grass plots, the empty chairs; and as he was regarding a group of people on horseback who, almost at the summit of the red hill, seemed about to disappear into the mist, behold! a sudden break in the sky; a silvery gleam shot athwart from the south, so that these distant figures grew almost black; and presently the frail sunshine of November was streaming all over the red ride and the raw green of the grass. His spirits rose somewhat. When he reached the Serpentine, the sunlight was shining on the rippling blue water; and there were pert young ladies of ten or twelve feeding the ducks; and away on the other side there was actually an island amid the blue ripples; and the island, if it was not as grand as Staffa nor as green as Ulva, was nevertheless an island, and it was pleasant enough to look at, with its bushes, and boats, and white swans. And then he bethought him of his first walks by the side of this little lake—when Oscar was the only creature in London he had to concern himself with—when each new day was only a brighter holiday than its predecessor—when he was of opinion that London was the happiest and most beautiful place in the world. And of that bright morning, too, when he walked through the empty streets at dawn, and came to the peacefully flowing river.

These idle meditations were suddenly interrupted. Away along the bank of the lake his keen eye could make out a figure, which, even at that distance, seemed so much to resemble one he knew, that his heart began to beat quick. Then the dress—all of black with a white hat and white gloves; was not that of the simplicity that had always so great an attraction for her? And he knew that she was singularly fond of Kensington Gardens; and might she not be going thither for a stroll before going back to the Piccadilly Theatre? He hastened his steps. He soon began to gain on the stranger; and the nearer he got the more it seemed to him that he recognised the graceful walk and carriage of this slender woman. She passed under the archway of the bridge. When she had emerged from the shadow, she paused for a moment or two to look at the ducks on the lake; and this arch of shadow seemed to frame a beautiful sunlit picture—the single figure against a back-ground of green bushes. And if this were

indeed she, how splendid the world would all become in a moment! In his eagerness of anticipation, he forgot his fear. What would she say? Was he to hear her laugh once more? And take her hand? Alas! when he got close enough to make sure, he found that this beautiful figure belonged to a somewhat pretty middle-aged lady, who had brought a bag of scraps with her to feed the ducks. The world grew empty again. He passed on, in a sort of dream. He only knew he was in Kensington Gardens; and that once or twice he had walked with her down those broad alleys in the happy summer-time of flowers and sunshine and the scent of limes. Now there was a pale blue mist in the open glades, and a gloomy purple instead of the brilliant green of the trees; and the cold wind that came across rustled the masses of brown and orange leaves that were lying scattered on the ground. He got a little more interested when he neared the Round Pond; for the wind had freshened, and there were several handsome craft out there on the raging deep, braving well the sudden squalls that laid them right on their beam-ends, and then let them come staggering and dripping up to the wind. But there were two small boys there who had brought with them a tiny vessel of home-made build, with a couple of lug-sails, a jib, and no rudder; and it was a great disappointment to them that this nondescript craft would move, if it moved at all, in an uncertain circle. Macleod came to their assistance—got a bit of floating stick, and carved out of it a rude rudder, altered the sails, and altogether put the ship into such sea-going trim that, when she was fairly launched, she kept a pretty good course for the other side, where doubtless she arrived in safety and discharged her passengers and cargo. He was almost sorry to part with the two small shipowners. They seemed to him the only people he knew in London.

But surely he had not come all the way from Castle Dare to walk about Kensington Gardens? What had become of that intense longing to see her—to hear her speak—that had made his life at home a constant torment and misery? Well, it still held possession of him; but all the same there was this indefinable dread that held him back. Perhaps he was afraid that he would have to confess to her the true reason for his having come to

London. Perhaps he feared he might find her something entirely different from the creature of his dreams. At all events, as he returned to his rooms and sat down by himself to think over all the things that might accrue from this step of his, he only got further and further into a haze of nervous indecision. One thing only was clear to him. With all his hatred and jealousy of the theatre, to the theatre that night he should have to go. He could not know that she was so near to him—that at a certain time and place he could certainly see her and listen to her—without going. He bethought him, moreover, of what he had once heard her say—that while she could fairly well make out the people in the galleries and boxes, those who were sitting in the stalls close to the orchestra were, by reason of the glare of the footlights, quite invisible to her. Might he not, then, get into some corner where, himself unseen, he might be so near her that he could almost stretch out his hand to her, and take her hand, and tell by its warmth and throbbing that it was a real woman, and not a dream, that filled his heart?

Major Stewart was put off by some excuse; and at eight o'clock Macleod walked up to the theatre. He drew near with some apprehension; it almost seemed to him as though the man in the box-office recognised him; and knew the reason for his demanding one of those stalls. He got it easily enough; there was no great run on the new piece, even though Miss Gertrude White was the heroine. He made his way along the narrow corridors; he passed into the glare of the house; he took his seat with his ears dinned by the loud music; and waited. He paid no heed to his neighbours; he had already twisted up the programme so that he could not have read it if he had wished; the was aware mostly of a sort of choking sensation about the throat.

When Gertrude White did appear—she came in unexpectedly—he almost uttered a cry; and it would have been a cry of delight. For there was the flesh-and-blood woman a thousand times more interesting, and beautiful, and lovable than all his fancied pictures of her. Look how she walks—how simply and gracefully she takes off her hat and places it on the table—look at the play of light and life and gladness on her face—at the eloquence of her eyes! He had been thinking of her eyes as too

calmly observant and serious: he saw them now, and was amazed at the difference—they seemed to have so much clear light in them, and pleasant laughter. He did not fear at all that she should see him. She was so near—he wished he could take her hand, and lead her away. What concern had these people around with her? This was Gertrude White—whom he knew. She was a friend of Mrs. Ross's; she lived in a quiet little home, with an affectionate and provoking sister; she had a great admiration for Oscar the collie; she had the whitest hand in the world as she offered you some salad at the small, neat table. What was she doing here—amid all this glaring sham—before all these people? "*Come away quickly!*" his heart cried to her. "*Quick—quick—let us get away together—there is some mistake—some illusion—outside you will breathe the fresh air and get into the reality of the world again—and you will ask about Oscar, and young Ogilvie—and one might hold your hand—your real warm hand—and perhaps hold it tight, and not give it up to any one whatsoever!*" His own hand was trembling with excitement. The eagerness of delight with which he listened to every word uttered by the low-toned and gentle voice was almost painful; and yet he knew it not. He was as one demented. This was Gertrude White—speaking, walking, smiling, a fire of beauty in her clear eyes, her parted lips when she laughed letting the brilliant light just touch for an instant the milk-white teeth. This was no pale Roseleaf at all—no dream or vision—but the actual laughing, talking, beautiful woman, who had more than ever of that strange grace and witchery about her that had fascinated him when first he saw her. She was so near that he could have thrown a rose to her—a red rose full-blown and full-scented. He forgave the theatre—or rather he forgot it—in the unimaginable delight of being so near to her. And when at length she left the stage, he had no jealousy at all of the poor people who remained there to go through their marionette business. He hoped they might all become great actors and actresses. He even thought he would try to get to understand the story—seeing he should have nothing else to do until Gertrude White came back again.

Now Keith Macleod was no more ignorant or innocent than

anybody else; but there was one social misdemeanour—a mere peccadillo, let us say—that was quite unintelligible to him. He could not understand how a man, a grown man, supposed to have some self-respect, could go philandering after a married woman; and still less could he understand how a married woman should, instead of attending to her children and her house and such matters, make herself ridiculous by aping girlhood and pretending to have a lover. He had read a great deal about this; and he was told it was common; but he did not believe it. The same authorities assured him that the women of England were drunkards in secret; he did not believe it. The same authorities insisted that the sole notion of marriage that occupied the head of an English girl of our own day was as to how she should sell her charms to the highest bidder; he did not believe that either. And indeed he argued with himself, in considering to what extent books and plays could be trusted in such matters, that in one obvious case the absurdity of these allegations was proved. If France were the France of French playwrights and novelists, the whole business of the country would come to a standstill. If it was the sole and constant occupation of every adult Frenchman to run after his neighbour's wife, how could bridges be built, taxes collected, fortifications planned? Surely a Frenchman must sometimes think—if only by accident—of something other than his neighbour's wife? Macleod laughed to himself in the solitude of Castle Dare, and contemptuously flung the unfinished paper-covered novel aside.

But what was his surprise and indignation—his shame, even—on finding that this very piece in which Gertrude White was acting, was all about a jealous husband, and a gay and thoughtless wife, and a villain, who did not at all silently plot her ruin, but frankly confided his aspirations to a mutual friend, and rather sought for sympathy; while she, Gertrude White herself, had, before all these people, to listen to advances which, in her innocence, she was not supposed to understand! As the play proceeded, his brows grew darker and darker. And the husband, who ought to have been the guardian of his wife's honour? Well, the husband in this rather poor play was a creation that is common in modern English drama. He represented one idea,

at least, that the English playwright has certainly not borrowed from the French stage. Moral worth is best indicated by a sullen demeanour. The man who has a pleasant manner is dangerous and a profligate: the virtuous man—the true-hearted Englishman—conducts himself as a boor, and proves the goodness of his nature by his silence and his sulks. The hero of this trumpery piece was of this familiar type. He saw the gay fascinator coming about his house; but he was too proud and dignified to interfere. He knew of his young wife becoming the by-word of his friends; but he only clasped his hands on his fore-head—and sought solitude—and scowled as a man of virtue should. Macleod had paid but little attention to stories of this kind when he had merely read them; but when the situation was visible—when actual people were before him—the whole thing looked more real, and his sympathies became active enough. How was it possible, he thought, for this poor dolt to fume and mutter, and let his innocent wife go her own way alone and unprotected, when there was a door in the room, and a window by way of alternative? There was one scene in which the faithless friend and the young wife were together in her drawing-room. He drew nearer to her; he spoke softly to her; he ventured to take her hand. And while he was looking up appealingly to her, Macleod was regarding his face. He was calculating to himself the precise spot between the eyes where a man's knuckles would most effectually tell; and his hand was clenched; and his teeth set hard. There was a look on his face which would have warned any gay young man that when Macleod should marry his wife would need no second champion.

But was this the atmosphere by which she was surrounded? It is needless to say that the piece was proper enough. Virtue was triumphant; vice compelled to sneak off discomfited. The indignant outburst of shame and horror and contempt on the part of the young wife when she came to know what the villain's suave intentions really meant, gave Miss White an excellent opportunity of displaying her histrionic gifts; and the public applauded vehemently; but Macleod had no pride in her triumph. He was glad when the piece ended—when the honest-hearted Englishman so far recovered speech as to declare that

his confidence in his wife was restored, and so far forgot his stolidity of face and demeanour as to point out to the villain the way to the door instead of kicking him thither. Macleod breathed more freelý when he knew that Gertrude White was now about to go away to the shelter and quiet of her own home. He went back to his rooms and tried to forget the precise circumstances in which he had just seen her.

But not to forget herself. A new gladness filled his heart when he thought of her—thought of her not now as a dream or a vision, but as the living and breathing woman whose musical laugh seemed still to be ringing in his ears. He could see her plainly—the face all charged with life and loveliness; the clear bright eyes that he had no longer any fear of meeting; the sweet mouth with its changing smiles. When Major Stewart came home that night, he noticed a most marked change in the manner of his companion. Macleod was excited, eager, talkative; full of high-spirits and friendliness; he joked his friend about his playing truant from his wife. He was anxious to know all about the Major's adventures; and pressed him to have but one other cigar; and vowed that he would take him on the following evening to the old place in London where a good dinner could be had. There was gladness in his eyes; a careless satisfaction in his manner; he was ready to do anything, go anywhere. This was more like the Macleod of old. Major Stewart came to the conclusion that the atmosphere of London had had a very good effect on his friend's spirits.

When Macleod went to bed that night there were wild and glad desires and resolves in his brain that might otherwise have kept him awake but for the fatigue he had lately endured. He slept, and he dreamed; and the figure that he saw in his dreams—though she was distant somehow—had a look of tenderness in her eyes, and she held a red rose in her hand.

CHAPTER XXII.

A DECLARATION.

November though it was, next morning broke brilliantly over London. There was a fresh west wind blowing; there was a clear sunshine filling the thoroughfares; if one were on the look-out for picturesqueness even in Bury Street, was there not a fine touch of colour where the softly red chimney-pots rose far away into the blue? It was not possible to have always around one the splendour of the northern seas.

And Macleod would not listen to a word his friend had to say concerning the important business that had brought them both to London.

"To-night, man—to-night—we will arrange it all to-night," he would say, and there was a nervous excitement about his manner for which the Major could not at all account.

"Sha'n't I see you till the evening then?" he asked.

"No," Macleod said, looking anxiously out of the window, as if he feared some thunder-storm would suddenly shut out the clear light of this beautiful morning. "I don't know—perhaps I may be back before—but at any rate we meet at seven. You will remember seven?"

"Indeed I am not likely to forget it," his companion said, for he had been told about five-and-thirty times.

It was close on eleven o'clock when Macleod left the house. There was a grateful freshness about the morning even here in the middle of London. People looked cheerful; Piccadilly was thronged with idlers come out to enjoy the sunshine; there was still a leaf or two fluttering on the trees in the squares. Why should this man go eagerly tearing away northward in a hansom—with an anxious and absorbed look on his face—when everybody seemed inclined to saunter leisurely along, breathing the sweet wind, and feeling the sunlight on his cheek?

It was scarcely half past eleven when Macleod got out of the hansom, and opened a small gate, and walked up to the door of

a certain house. He was afraid she had already gone. He was afraid she might resent his calling at so unusual an hour. He was afraid—of a thousand things. And when, at last, the trim maid-servant told him that Miss White was within and asked him to step into the drawing-room, it was almost as one in a dream that he followed her. As one in a dream, truly; but nevertheless he saw every object around him with a marvellous vividness. Next day he could recollect every feature of the room—the empty fireplace, the black-framed mirror, the Chinese fans, the small cabinets with their shelves of blue and white, and the large open book on the table, with a bit of tartan lying on it. These things seemed to impress themselves on his eyesight involuntarily; for he was in reality intently listening for a soft footfall outside the door. He went forward to this open book. It was a volume of a work on the Highland clans—a large and expensive work that was not likely to belong to Mr. White. And this coloured figure? It was the representative of the Clan Macleod; and this bit of cloth that lay on the open book was of the Macleod tartan. He withdrew quickly, as though he had stumbled on some dire secret. He went to the window. He saw only leafless trees now, and withered flowers; with the clear sunshine touching the sides of houses and walls that had in the summer months been quite invisible.

There was a slight noise behind him; he turned, and all the room seemed filled with a splendour of light and of life as she advanced to him—the clear, beautiful eyes full of gladness, the lips smiling, the hand frankly extended. And of a sudden his heart sank. Was it indeed of her,

"The glory of life, the beauty of the world,"

that he had dared to dream wild and impossible dreams? He had set out that morning with a certain masterful sense that he would face his fate. He had "taken the world for his pillow," as the Gaelic stories say. But at this sudden revelation of the incomparable grace and self-possession and high loveliness of this beautiful creature, all his courage and hopes fled instantly, and he could only stammer out excuses for his calling so early. He was eagerly trying to make himself out an ordinary visitor. He explained that he did not know but that she might be going to

the theatre during the day. He was in London for a short time, on business. It was an unconscionable hour.

"But I am so glad to see you," she said, with a perfect sweetness, and her eyes said more than her words. "I should have been really vexed if I had heard you had passed through London without calling on us. Won't you sit down?"

As he sat down, she turned for a second, and without any embarrassment shut the big book that had been lying open on the table.

"It is very beautiful weather," she remarked—there was no tremor about *her* fingers, at all events, as she made secure the brooch that fastened the simple morning dress at the neck; "only it seems a pity to throw away such beautiful sunshine on withered gardens and bare trees. We have some fine chrysanthemums, though; but I confess I don't like chrysanthemums myself. They come at the wrong time. They look unnatural. They only remind one of what is gone. If we are to have winter, we ought to have it out-and-out: the chrysanthemums always seem to me as if they were making a pretence—trying to make you believe that there was still some life in the dead garden."

It was very pretty talk all this about chrysanthemums, uttered in the low-toned, and gentle, and musical voice; but somehow there was a burning impatience in his heart—and a bitter sense of hopelessness—and he felt as though he would cry out in his despair. How could he sit there and listen to talk about chrysanthemums? His hands were tightly clasped together; his heart was throbbing quickly; there was a humming in his ears, as though something there refused to hear about chrysanthemums.

"I—I saw you at the theatre last night," said he.

Perhaps it was the abruptness of the remark that caused the quick blush. She lowered her eyes. But all the same she said, with perfect self-possession,

"Did you like the piece?"

And he, too: was he not determined to play the part of an ordinary visitor?

"I am not much of a judge," said he lightly. "The drawing-room scene is very pretty. It is very like a drawing-room. I suppose these are real curtains, and real pictures?"

"Oh, yes, it is all real furniture," said she.

Thereafter, for a second, blank silence. Neither dared to touch that deeper stage question that lay next their hearts. But when Keith Macleod, in many a word of timid suggestion, and in the jesting letter he sent her from Castle Dare, had ventured upon that dangerous ground, it was not to talk about the real furniture of a stage drawing-room. However, was not this an ordinary morning call? His manner—his speech—everything said so but the tightly clasped hands, and perhaps too a certain intensity of look in the eyes, which seemed anxious and constrained.

"Papa, at least, is proud of our chrysanthemums," said Miss White, quickly getting away from the stage question. "He is in the garden now. Will you go out and see him? I am sorry Carry has gone to school."

She rose. He rose also, and he was about to lift his hat from the table, when he suddenly turned to her.

"A drowning man will cry out—how can you prevent his crying out?"

She was startled by the change in the sound of his voice, and still more by the almost haggard look of pain and entreaty in his eyes. He seized her hand; she would have withdrawn it, but she could not.

"You will listen. It is no harm to you. I must speak now, or I will die," said he quite wildly, "and if you think I am mad, perhaps you are right, but people have pity for a madman. Do you know why I have come to London? It is, to see you. I could bear it no longer—the fire that was burning and killing me. Oh, it is no use my saying it is love for you—I do not know what it is—but only that I must tell you, and you cannot be angry with me—you can only pity me and go away. That is it—it is nothing to you—you can go away."

She burst into tears, and snatched her hand from him, and with both her hands covered her face.

"Ah!" said he, "is it pain to you that I should tell you of this madness? But you will forgive me—and you will forget it—and it will not pain you to-morrow or any other day. Surely you are not to blame! Do you remember the days when we became friends?—it seems a long time ago, but they were

beautiful days, and you were very kind to me, and I was glad I had come to London to make so kind a friend. And it was no fault of yours that I went away with that sickness of the heart; and how could you know about the burning fire, and the feeling that if I did not see you I might as well be dead? And I am come—and I see you—and now I know no more what is to happen when I go away. And I will call you Gertrude for once only. Gertrude, sit down now—for a moment or two—and do not grieve any more over what is only a misfortune. I want to tell you. After I have spoken, I will go away, and there will be an end of the trouble."

She did sit down; her hands were clasped in piteous despair; he saw the tear-drops on the long beautiful lashes.

"And if the drowning man cries?" said he. "It is only a breath. The waves go over him, and the world is at peace. And oh! do you know, that I have taken a strange fancy of late—— But I will not trouble you with that; you may hear of it afterwards; you will understand, and know you have no blame, and there is an end of trouble. It is quite strange what fancies get into one's head when one is sick—heart-sick. Do you know what I thought this morning? Will you believe it? Will you let the drowning man cry out in his madness? Why, I said to myself, 'Up now, and have courage! Up now, and be brave, and win a bride as they used to do in the old stories.' And it was you—it was you—my madness thought of. 'You will tell her,' I said to myself, 'of all the love and the worship you have for her, and your thinking of her by day and by night; and she is a woman, and she will have pity. And then in her surprise—why——' But then you came into the room—it is only a little while ago—but it seems for ever and ever away now—and I have only pained you——"

She sprang to her feet; her face white, her lips proud and determined. And for a second she put her hand on his shoulders; and the wet, full, piteous eyes met his. But as rapidly she withdrew them—almost shuddering—and turned away; and her hands were apart, each clasped, and she bowed her head. Gertrude White had never acted like that on any stage.

And as for him, he stood absolutely dazed for a moment, not daring to think what that involuntary action might mean. He stepped forward—with a pale face and a bewildered air—and caught her hand. Her face she sheltered with the other, and she was sobbing bitterly.

"Gertrude," he said, "what is it? What do you mean?"

The broken voice answered, though her face was turned aside—

"It is I who am miserable."

"You who are miserable?"

She turned and looked fair into his face—with her eyes all wet, and beautiful, and piteous.

"Can't you see? Don't you understand?" she said. "Oh, my good friend! of all the men in the world you are the very last I would bring trouble to. And I cannot be a hypocrite with you. I feared something of this; and now the misery is that I cannot say to you, 'Here, take my hand. It is yours. You have won your bride.' I cannot do it. If we were both differently situated—it might be otherwise——"

"It might be otherwise!" he exclaimed, with a sudden wonder. "Gertrude, what do you mean? Situated? Is it only that? Look me in the face, now, and as you are a true woman tell me—if we were both free from all situation—if there were no difficulties—nothing to be thought of—could you give yourself to me? Would you really become my wife—you who have all the world flattering you?"

She dared not look him in the face. There was something about the vehemence of his manner that almost terrified her. But she answered bravely, in the sweet, low, trembling voice, and with downcast eyes—

"If I were to become the wife of any one, it is your wife I would like to be; and I have thought of it. Oh, I cannot be a hypocrite with you when I see the misery I have brought you! And I have thought of giving up all my present life, and all the wishes and dreams I have cherished, and going away and living the simple life of a woman. And under whose guidance would I try that rather than yours? You made me think. But it is all a dream—a fancy. It is impossible. It would only bring misery to you and to me——"

"But why—but why?" he eagerly exclaimed; and there was a proud light in his face. "Gertrude, if you can say so much, why not say all? What are obstacles? There can be none if you have the fiftieth part of the love for me that I have for you! Obstacles!"—and he laughed with a strange laugh.

She looked up in his face.

"And would it be so great a happiness for you? that would make up for all the trouble I have brought you?" she said, wistfully; and his answer was to take both her hands in his, and there was such joy in his heart that he could not speak at all. But she only shook her head, somewhat sadly, and withdrew her hands, and sat down again by the table.

"It is wrong of me even to think of it," she said. "To-day I might say 'yes;' and to-morrow? You might inspire me with courage now; and afterwards—I should only bring you further pain. I do not know myself. I could not be sure of myself. How could I dare drag you into such a terrible risk? It is better as it is. The pain you are suffering will go. You will come to call me your friend; and you will thank me that I refused. Perhaps I shall suffer a little too," she added, and once more she rather timidly looked up into his face. "You do not know the fascination of seeing your scheme of life, that you have been dreaming about, just suddenly put before you for acceptance; and you want all your common sense to hold back. But I know it will be better—better for both of us. You must believe me."

"I do not believe you, and I will not believe you," said he, proudly, "and now you have said so much I am not going to take any refusal at all. Not now. Gertrude, I have courage for both of us; when you are timid, you will take my hand. Say it, then! A word only! You have already said all but that!"

He seemed scarcely the same man who had appealed to her with the wild eyes and the haggard face. His look was radiant and proud. He spoke with a firm voice; and yet there was a great tenderness in his tone.

"I am sure you love me," she said in a low voice.

"You will see," he rejoined, with a firm confidence.

"And I am not going to requite your love ill. You are too vehement. You think of nothing but the one end to it all. But

I am a woman, and women are taught to be patient. Now you must let me think about all you have said."

"And you do not quite refuse?" said he.

She hesitated for a moment or two.

"I must think for you as well as for myself," she said, in a scarcely audible voice. "Give me time. Give me till the end of the week."

"At this hour I will come."

"And you will believe I have decided for the best—that I have tried hard to be fair to you as well as myself?"

"I know you are too true a woman for anything else," he said; and then he added, "Ah, well, now, you have had enough misery for one morning—you must dry your eyes now, and we will go out into the garden—and if I am not to say anything of all my gratitude to you—why? Because I hope there will be many a year to do that in!"

She went to fetch a light shawl and a hat; he kept turning over the things on the table, his fingers trembling, his eyes seeing nothing. If they did see anything it was a vision of the brown moors near Castle Dare, and a beautiful creature, clad all in cream-colour and scarlet, drawing near the great grey stone house.

She came into the room again; joy leapt to his eyes.

"Will you follow me?"

There was a strangely subdued air about her manner as she led him to where her father was; perhaps she was rather tired after the varied emotions she had experienced; perhaps she was still anxious. He was not anxious. It was in a glad way that he addressed the old gentleman who stood there with a spade in his hand.

"It is indeed a beautiful garden," Macleod said—looking round on the withered leaves and damp soil—"no wonder you look after it yourself."

"I am not gardening," the old man said peevishly. "I have been putting a knife in the ground—burying the hatchet, you might call it. Fancy! A man sees an old hunting-knife in a shop in Gloucester; a hunting-knife of the time of Charles I., with a beautifully carved ivory handle; and he thinks he will make a present of it to me. What does he do but go and have

it ground and sharpened and polished until it looks like something sent from Sheffield the day before yesterday!"

"You ought to be very pleased, papa, you got it at all," said Gertrude White; but she was looking elsewhere—and rather absently too.

"And so you have buried it to restore the tone?"

"I have," said the old gentleman, marching off with the shovel to a sort of outhouse.

Macleod speedily took his leave.

"Saturday next at noon," said he to her, with no timidity in his voice.

"Yes," said she, more gently, and with downcast eyes.

He walked away from the house—he knew not whither. He saw nothing around him. He walked hard, sometimes talking to himself. In the afternoon he found himself in a village in Berkshire, close by which, fortunately, there was a railway station; and he had just time to get back to keep his appointment with Major Stewart.

They sat down to dinner.

"Come now, Macleod, tell me where you have been all day," said the rosy-faced soldier, carefully tucking his napkin under his chin.

Macleod burst out laughing.

"Another day—another day, Stewart, I will tell you all about it. It is the most ridiculous story you ever heard in your life!"

It was a strange sort of laughing, for there were tears in the younger man's eyes. But Major Stewart was too busy to notice; and presently they began to talk about the real and serious object of their expedition to London.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A RED ROSE.

FROM nervous and unreasoning dread to overweening and extravagant confidence there was but a single bound. After the timid confession she had made, how could he have any further fear? He knew now the answer she must certainly give him. What but the one word "*yes*"—musical as the sound of summer seas—could fitly close and atone for all that long period of doubt and despair? And would she murmur it with the low, sweet voice, or only look it with the clear and lambent eyes? Once uttered, anyhow, surely the glad message would instantly wing its flight away to the far north; and Colonsay would hear; and the green shores of Ulva would laugh; and through all the wild dashing and roaring of the seas there would be a soft ringing as of wedding-bells. The Gometra men will have a good glass that night; and who will take the news to distant Fladda and rouse the lonely Dutchman from his winter sleep? There is a bride coming to Castle Dare!

When Norman Ogilvie had even mentioned marriage, Macleod had merely shaken his head and turned away. There was no issue that way from the wilderness of pain and trouble into which he had strayed. She was already wedded—to that cruel art that was crushing the woman within her. Her ways of life and his were separated as though by unknown oceans. And how was it possible that so beautiful a woman—surrounded by people who petted and flattered her—should not already have her heart engaged? Even if she were free, how could she have bestowed a thought on him—a passing stranger—a summer visitor—the acquaintance of an hour?

But no sooner had Gertrude White, to his sudden wonder, and joy, and gratitude, made that stammering confession, than the impetuosity of his passion leapt at once to the goal. He would not hear of any obstacles. He would not look at them. If she would but take his hand, he would lead her and guard

her, and all would go well. And it was to this effect that he wrote to her day after day, pouring out all the confidences of his heart to her, appealing to her, striving to convey to her something of his own high courage and hope. Strictly speaking, perhaps, it was not quite fair that he should thus have disturbed the calm of her deliberation. Had he not given her till the end of the week to come to a decision? But when in his eagerness he thought of some further reason, some further appeal, how could he remain silent? With the prize so near, he could not let it slip from his grasp through the consideration of niceties of conduct. By rights he ought to have gone up to Mr. White and begged for permission to pay his addresses to the old gentleman's daughter. He forgot all about that. He forgot that Mr. White was in existence. All his thinking from morning till night—and through much of the night too—was directed on her answer—the one small word filled with a whole worldful of light and joy.

"Say but this one word," he wrote to her, "then everything else becomes a mere trifle. If there are obstacles and troubles and what not, we will meet them one by one, and dispose of them. There can be no obstacles, if we are of one mind; and we shall be of one mind sure enough, if you will say you will become my wife; for there is nothing I will not consent to; and I shall only be too glad to have opportunities of showing my great gratitude to you for the sacrifice you must make. I speak of it as a sacrifice; but I do not believe it is one—whatever you may think now—and whatever natural regret you may feel—you will grow to feel there was no evil done you when you were drawn away from the life that now surrounds you. And if you were to say, 'I will become your wife only on one condition—that I am not asked to abandon my career as an actress,' still I would say, 'Become my wife.' Surely matters of arrangement are mere trifles—after you have given me your promise. And when you have placed your hand in mine (and the motto of the Macleods is *Hold Fast*) we can study conditions, and obstacles, and the other nonsense that our friends are sure to suggest, at our leisure. I think I already hear you say 'Yes;' I listen and listen until I almost hear your voice. And if it is to be 'Yes,'

will you wear a red rose in your dress on Saturday? I shall see that before you speak I will know what your message is, even if there are people about. One red rose only."

"Macleod," said Major Stewart to him, "did you come to London to write love-letters?"

"Love-letters!" he said, angrily; but then he laughed. "And what did you come to London for?"

"On a highly philanthropic errand," said the other, gravely, "which I hope to see fulfilled to-morrow. And if we have a day or two to spare, that is well enough, for one cannot be always at work; but I did not expect to take a holiday in the company of a man who spends three-fourths of the day at a writing-desk."

"Nonsense," said Macleod, though there was some tell-tale colour in his face. "All the writing I have done to-day would not fill up twenty minutes. And if I am a dull companion, is not Norman Ogilvie coming to dinner to-night to amuse you?"

While they were speaking a servant brought in a card.

"Ask the gentleman to come up," Macleod said, and then he turned to his companion. "What an odd thing! I was speaking to you a minute ago about that drag accident. And here is Beaureguard himself."

The tall, rough-visaged man—stooping slightly as though he thought the doorway was a trifle low—came forward and shook hands with Macleod, and was understood to inquire about his health, though what he literally said was, "Hawya, Macleod, hawya?"

"I heard you were in town from Paulton—you remember Paulton who dined with you at Richmond. He saw you in a hansom yesterday; and I took my chance of finding you in your old quarters. What are you doing in London?"

Macleod briefly explained.

"And you?" he asked, "what has brought you to London? I thought you and Lady Beauregard were in Ireland."

"We have just come over, and go down to Weatherill to-morrow. Won't you come down and shoot a pheasant or two before you return to the Highlands?"

"Well, the fact is," Macleod said, hesitatingly, "my friend and I—by the way, let me introduce you—Lord Beauregard,

Major Stewart—the fact is, we ought to go back directly after we have settled this business."

"But a day or two won't matter. Now, let me see. The Suffields come to us on Monday next, I think. We could get up a party for you on the Tuesday; and if your friend will come with you, we shall be six guns, which I always think the best number."

The gallant Major showed no hesitation whatever. The chance at blazing away at a whole atmosphereful of pheasants—for he so construed the invitation—did not often come in his way.

"I am quite sure a day or two won't make any difference," said he, quickly. "In any case we are not thinking of going till Monday, and that would only mean an extra day."

"Very well," Macleod said.

"Then you will come down to dinner on the Monday evening. I will see if there is any alteration in the trains, and drop you a note with full instructions. Is it a bargain?"

"It is."

"All right. I must be off now. Good-bye."

Major Stewart jumped to his feet with great alacrity, and warmly shook hands with the departing stranger. Then, when the door was shut, he went through a pantomimic expression of bringing down innumerable pheasants from every corner of the ceiling—with an occasional aim at the floor, where an imaginary hare was scurrying by.

"Macleod, Macleod," said he, "you are a trump. You may go on writing love-letters from now till next Monday afternoon. I suppose we shall have a good dinner too?"

"Beauregard is said to have the best *chef* in London; and I don't suppose he would leave so important a person in Ireland."

"You have my gratitude, Macleod—eternal, sincere, unbounded," the Major said seriously.

"But it is not I who am asking you to go and massacre a lot of pheasants," said Macleod; and he spoke rather absently, for he was thinking of the probable mood in which he would go down to Weatherill. One of a generous gladness and joy, the outward expression of an eager and secret happiness to be known

by none? Or what if there were no red rose at all on her bosom when she advanced to meet him with sad eyes?

They went down into Essex next day. Major Stewart was surprised to find that his companion talked not so much about the price of machines for drying saturated crops, as about the conjectural cost of living in the various houses they saw from afar, set amid the leafless trees of November.

"You don't think of coming to live in England, do you?" said he.

"No—at least, not at present," Macleod said. "Of course, one never knows what may turn up. I don't propose to live at Dare all my life."

"Your wife might want to live in England," the Major said coolly.

Macleod started and stared.

"You have been writing a good many letters of late," said his companion.

"And is that all?" said Macleod, answering him in the Gaelic. "You know the proverb—*Tossing the head will not make the boat row.* I am not married yet."

The result of this journey was, that they agreed to purchase one of the machines for transference to the rainy regions of Mull; and then they returned to London. This was on a Wednesday. Major Stewart considered they had a few days to idle by before the *battue;* Macleod was only excitedly aware that Thursday and Friday—two short November days—came between him and that decision which he regarded with an anxious joy.

The two days went by in a sort of dream. A pale fog hung over London; and as he wandered about he saw the tall houses rise faintly blue into the grey mist; and the great coffee-coloured river, flushed with recent rains, rolled down between the pale embankments; and the golden-red globe of the sun, occasionally becoming visible through the mottled clouds, sent a ray of fire here and there on some street-lamp or window-pane.

In the course of his devious wanderings—for he mostly went about alone—he made his way, with great trouble and perplexity, to the court in which the mother of Johnny Wickes lived; and he betrayed no shame at all in confronting the poor woman—

half starved, and pale, and emaciated as she was—whose child he had stolen. It was in a tone of quite gratuitous pleasantry that he described to her how the small lad was growing brown and fat; and he had the audacity to declare to her that as he proposed to pay the boy the sum of one shilling per week at present, he might as well hand over to her the three months' pay which he had already earned. And the woman was so amused at the notion of little Johnny Wickes being able to earn anything at all, that, when she received the money, and looked at it, she burst out crying; and she had so little of the spirit of the British matron, and so little regard for the laws of her country, that she invoked Heaven knows what—Heaven does know what—blessings on the head of the very man who had carried her child into slavery.

"And the first time I am going over to Oban," said he, "I will take him with me, and I will get a photograph of him made, and I will send it you. And did you get the rabbits?" said he.

"Yes, indeed, sir, I got the rabbits."

"And it is a very fine poacher your son promises to be, for he got every one of the rabbits with his own snare, though I think it was old Hamish who showed him how to use it. I will say good-bye to you now."

The poor woman seemed to hesitate for a second.

"If there was any sewing," said she, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, "that I could do for your good lady, sir——"

"But I am not married," said he quickly.

"Ah, well, indeed, sir," she said with a sigh.

"But if there is any lace, or sewing, or anything like that you can send to my mother, I have no doubt she will pay you for it as well as any one else——"

"I was not thinking of paying, sir; but to show you I am not ungrateful," was the answer—and if she said *hungrateful*, what matter? She was a woman without spirit; she had sold away her son.

From this dingy court he made his way round to Covent Garden Market, and he went into a florist's shop there.

"I want a bouquet," said he to the neat-handed maiden who looked up at him.

"Yes, sir," said she; "will you look at those in the window?"

"But I want one," said he, "with a single rose—a red rose—in the centre."

This proposition did not find favour in the eyes of the mild-mannered artist, who explained to him that something more important and ornate was necessary in the middle of a bouquet. He could have a circle of rosebuds, if he liked, outside; and a great white lily or camellia in the centre. He could have—this thing and the other; she showed him how she could combine the features of one bouquet with those of the next. But the tall Highlander remained obdurate.

"Yes," said he, "I think you are quite right. You are quite right, I am sure. But it is this I would rather have—only one red rose in the centre, and you can make the rest what you like, only I think if they were smaller flowers, and all white, that would be better."

"Very well," said the young lady with a pleasing smile (she was rather good-looking herself), "I will try what I can do for you if you don't mind waiting. Will you take a chair?"

He was quite amazed by the dexterity with which those nimble fingers took from one cluster and another cluster the very flowers he would himself have chosen; and by the rapid fashion in which they were dressed, fitted, and arranged. The work of art grew apace.

"But you must have something to break the white," said she, smiling, "or it will look too like a bride's bouquet," and with that—almost in the twinkling of an eye—she had put a circular line of dark purple-blue through the cream-white blossoms. It was a splendid rose that lay in the midst of all that beauty.

"What price would you like to give, sir?" the gentle Phyllis had said at the very outset. "Half a guinea—fifteen shillings?"

"Give me a beautiful rose," said he, "and I do not mind what the price is."

And at last the lace-paper was put round; and a little further trimming and setting took place; and finally the bouquet was swathed in soft white wool and put into a basket.

"Shall I take the address?" said the young lady, no doubt expecting that he would write it on the back of one of his cards. But no. He dictated the address; and then laid down the money. The astute young person was puzzled—perhaps disappointed.

"Is there no message, sir?" said she:—"no card?"

"No; but you must be sure to have it delivered to-night."

"It shall be sent off at once," said she, probably thinking that this was a very foolish young man who did not know the ways of the world. The only persons of whom she had any experience who sent bouquets without a note or a letter were husbands, who were either making up a quarrel with their wives or going to the opera, and she had observed on such occasions that the difference between twelve-and-sixpence and fifteen shillings was regarded and considered.

He slept but little that night; and next morning he got up nervous and trembling—like a drunken man—with half the courage and confidence, that had so long sustained him, gone. Major Stewart went out early. He kept pacing about the room until the frightfully slow half-hours went by; he hated the clock on the mantelpiece. And then, by a strong effort of will, he delayed starting until he should barely have time to reach her house by twelve o'clock, so that he should have the mad delight of eagerly wishing the hansom had a still more furious speed. He had chosen his horse well. It wanted five minutes to the appointed hour when he arrived at the house.

Did this trim maid-servant know? Was there anything of welcome in the demure smile? He followed her; his face was pale, though he knew it not; in the dusk of the room he was left alone.

But what was this—on the table? He almost uttered a cry as his bewildered eyes fixed themselves on it. The very bouquet he had sent the previous evening; and behold—behold! the red rose wanting! And then, at the same moment, he turned; and there was a vision of something all in white—that came to him timidly—all in white but for the red star of love shining there. And she did not speak at all; but she buried her head in his bosom; and he held her hands tight.

And now what will Ulva say; and the lonely shores of Fladda; and the distant Dutchman roused from his winter sleep amid the wild waves? Far away over the white sands of Iona—and the sunlight must be shining there now—there is many a sacred spot fit for the solemn plighting of lovers' vows; and if there is any organ wanted, what more noble than the vast Atlantic rollers booming into the Bourg and Gribun caves? Surely they must know already; for the sea-birds have caught the cry; and there is a sound all through the glad rushing of the morning seas like the sound of wedding-bells. *There is a bride coming to Castle Dare*—the islands listen; and the wild sea calls again; and the green shores of Ulva grow greener still in the sunlight. There is a bride coming to Castle Dare; and the bride is dressed all in white—only she wears a red rose.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ENTHUSIASMS.

SHE was seated alone, her arms on the table, her head bent down. There was no red rose now in the white morning dress, for she had given it to him when he left. The frail November sunshine streamed into the room and put a shimmer of gold on the soft brown of her hair.

It was a bold step she had taken without counsel of any one. Her dream was now to give up everything that she had hitherto cared about, and to go away into private life to play the part of Lady Bountiful. And if doubts about the strength of her own resolution occasionally crossed her mind, could she not appeal for aid and courage to him who would always be by her side? When she became a Macleod she would have to accept the motto of the Macleods. That motto is *Hold Fast*.

She heard her sister come into the house, and she raised her

head. Presently Carry opened the door: and it was clear she was in high spirits.

"Oh, Mopsy," said she — and this was a pet name she gave her sister only when the latter was in great favour—"did you ever see such a morning in November? Don't you think papa might take us to Kew Gardens?"

"I want to speak to you, Carry—come here," she said gravely; and the younger sister went and stood by the table. "You know you and I are thrown very much on each other; and we ought to have no secrets from each other; and we ought to be always quite sure of each other's sympathy. Now, Carry, you must be patient, you must be kind; if I don't get sympathy from you, from whom should I get it?"

Carry withdrew a step, and her manner instantly changed. Gertrude White was a very clever actress; but she had never been able to impose on her younger sister. This imploring look was all very fine; this appeal for sympathy was pathetic enough; but both only awakened Carry's suspicions. In their ordinary talk sisters rarely use such formal words as "sympathy."

"What do you mean?" said she, sharply.

"There—already!" exclaimed the other, apparently in deep disappointment. "Just when I most need your kindness and sympathy you show yourself most unfeeling——"

"I wish you would tell me what it is all about," Carry said impatiently.

The elder sister lowered her eyes, and her fingers began to work with a paper-knife that was lying there. Perhaps this was only a bit of stage-business; or perhaps she was apprehensive about the effect of her announcement.

"Carry," she said in a low voice, "I have promised to marry Sir Keith Macleod."

Carry uttered a quick cry of horror and surprise; but this, too, was only a bit of stage-effect, for she had fully anticipated the disclosure.

"Well, Gertrude White!" said she, apparently when she had recovered her breath. "Well—I—I—I—never——"

Her language was not as imposing as her gestures; but then

nobody had written the part for her; whereas her very tolerable acting was nature's own gift.

"Now, Carry, be reasonable—don't be angry—what is the use of being vexed with what is past recalling? Any other sister would have been glad at such a time——" these were the hurried and broken sentences with which the culprit sought to stave off the coming wrath. But, oddly enough, Miss Carry refrained from denunciations or any other stormy expression of her anger and scorn. She suddenly assumed a cold and critical air.

"I suppose," said she, "before you allowed Sir Keith Macleod to ask you to become his wife, you explained to him our circumstances?"

"I don't understand you."

"You told him, of course, that you had a ne'er-do-well brother in Australia, who might at any moment appear and disgrace the whole family?"

"I told him nothing of the kind. I had no opportunity of going into family affairs. And if I had—what has Tom got to do with Sir Keith Macleod? I had forgotten his very existence—no wonder, after eight years of absolute silence."

But Carry, having fired this shot, was off after other ammunition.

"You told him you have had several sweethearts before?"

"No, I did not," said Miss Gertrude White, warmly, "because it isn't true."

"What?—Mr. Howson?"

"The orchestra-leader in a provincial theatre!"

"Oh yes, but you did not speak so contemptuously of him then. Why, you made him believe he was another Mendelssohn; and, what is more, Gertrude White, you made him believe that you and he were engaged."

"You are talking nonsense," said the other, frowning, and with her head turned aside.

"And Mr. Brook—you no doubt told him that Mr. Brook called on papa, and asked him to go down to Doctors' Commons and see for himself what money he would have——"

"And what then? How can I prevent an idiotic boy, who

chooses to turn me into a heroine, from making a fool of himself?"

"Oh, Gertrude White," said Carry, solemnly. "Will you sit there and tell me you gave him no encouragement?"

"This is mere folly," the elder sister said petulantly, as she rose, and proceeded to put straight a few of the things about the room. "I had hoped better things of you, Carry. I tell you of an important step I have taken in my life, and you bring out a lot of tattle and nonsense. However, I can act for myself. It is true, I had imagined something different. When I marry, of course we shall be separated. I had looked forward to the pleasure of showing you my new home——"

"Where is it to be?"

"Wherever my husband wishes it to be," she answered proudly; but there was a conscious flush of colour in her face as she uttered—for the first time—that word.

"In the Highlands, I suppose, for he is not rich enough to have two houses," said Carry, which showed that she had been pondering over this matter before. "And he has already got his mother and his old maid sister, or whatever she is, in the house—you will make a pretty family."

This was a cruel thrust. When Macleod had spoken of the far home overlooking the northern seas, what could be more beautiful than his picture of the noble and silver-haired dame and of the gentle and loving cousin who was the friend and counsellor of the poor people around? And when he had suggested that some day or other Mr. White might bring his daughter to these remote regions to see all the wonders and splendours of them, he told her how the beautiful mother would take her to this place and to that place, and how that Janet Macleod would pet and befriend her, and perhaps teach her a few words of the Gaelic that she might have a kindly phrase for the passer-by. But this picture of Carry's——: a houseful of wrangling women!

If she had had her will just then, she would instantly have recalled Macleod, and placed his courage and careless confidence between her and this cruel criticism. She had never, in truth, thought of these things. His pertinacity would not allow her. He had kept insisting that the only point for her to consider was

whether she had sufficient love for him to enable her to answer his great love for her with the one word "Yes." Thereafter, according to his showing, everything else was a mere trifle. Obstacles, troubles, delays?—he would hear of nothing of the sort. And although, while he was present, she had been inspired by something of this confident feeling, now when she was attacked in his absence she felt herself defenceless.

"You may be as disagreeable as you like, Carry," said she, almost wearily. "I cannot help it. I never could understand your dislike to Sir Keith Macleod——"

"Cannot you understand," said the younger sister with some show of indignation, "that if you are to marry at all I should like to see you marry an Englishman, instead of a great Highland savage, who thinks about nothing but beasts' skins? And why should you marry at all, Gertrude White? I suppose he will make you leave the theatre; and instead of being a famous woman, whom everybody admires and talks about, you will be plain Mrs. Nobody, hidden away in some place, and no one will ever hear of you again! Do you know what you are doing? Did you ever hear of any woman making such a fool of herself before?"

So far from being annoyed by this strong language the elder sister seemed quite pleased.

"Do you know, Carry, I like to hear you talk like that," she said with a smile. "You almost persuade me that I am not asking him for too great a sacrifice, after all——"

"A sacrifice! On his part!" exclaimed the younger sister, and then she added with decision, "But it sha'n't be, Gertrude White! I will go to papa!"

"Pardon me," said the elder sister, who was nearer the door, "you need not trouble yourself; I am going now."

She went into the small room which was called her father's study, but which was in reality a sort of museum. She closed the door behind her.

"I have just had the pleasure of an interview with Carry, papa," she said, with a certain bitterness of tone, "and she has tried hard to make me as miserable as I can be. If I am to have another dose of it from you, papa, I may as

well have it at once. I have promised to marry Sir Keith Macleod."

She sank down in an easy-chair. There was a look on her face which plainly said, "Now do your worst; I cannot be more wretched than I am."

"You have promised to marry Sir Keith Macleod?" he repeated slowly, and fixing his eyes on her face.

He did not break into any rage, and accuse Macleod of treachery or her of filial disobedience. He knew that she was familiar with that kind of thing on the stage. What he had to deal with was the immediate future, not the past.

"Yes," she answered.

"Well," he said, with the same deliberation of tone, "I suppose you have not come to me for advice, since you have acted so far for yourself. If I were to give you advice, however, it would be to break your promise as soon as you decently can, both for his sake and for your own."

"I thought you would say so," she said with a sort of desperate mirth. "I came to have all my wretchedness heaped on me at once. It is a very pleasing sensation. I wonder if I could express it on the stage—that would be making use of my new experiences—as you have taught me——"

But here she burst into tears; and then got up and walked impatiently about the room; and finally dried her eyes, with shame and mortification visible on her face.

"What have *you* to say to me, papa? I am a fool to mind what a school-girl says."

"I don't know that I have anything to say," he observed calmly. "You know your own feelings best."

And then he regarded her attentively.

"I suppose when you marry you will give up the stage?"

"I suppose so," she said in a low voice.

"I should doubt," he said with quite a dispassionate air, "your being able to play one part for a lifetime. You might get tired—and that would be awkward for your husband and yourself. I don't say anything about your giving up all your prospects, although I had great pride in you and a still greater hope. That is for your own consideration. If you think you

will be happier—if you are sure you will have no regret—if, as I say, you think you can play the one part for lifetime—well and good."

"And you are right," she said bitterly, "to speak of me as an actress, and not as a human being. I must be playing a part to the end, I suppose? Perhaps so. Well, I hope I shall please my smaller audience as well as I seem to have pleased the bigger one."

Then she altered her tone.

"I told you, papa, the other day of my having seen that child run over and brought back to the woman who was standing on the pavement."

"Yes," said he; but wondering why this incident should be referred to at such a moment.

"I did not tell you the truth—at least, the whole truth. When I walked away, what was I thinking of? I caught myself trying to recall the way in which the woman threw her arms up when she saw the dead body of her child, and I was wondering whether I could repeat it. And then I began to ask myself whether I was a devil—or a woman."

"Bah!" said he. "That is a craze you have at present. You have had fifty others before. What I am afraid of is that, at the instigation of some such temporary fad, you will take a step that you will find irrevocable. The weak point about you is that you can make yourself believe anything. Just think over it, Gerty. If you leave the stage, you will destroy many a hope I had formed; but that doesn't matter. Whatever is most for your happiness—that is the only point."

"And so you have given me your congratulations, papa," she said, rising. "I have been so thoroughly trained to be an actress that, when I marry, I shall only go from one stage to another."

"That was only a figure of speech," said he.

"At all events," she said, "I shall not be vexed by petty jealousies of other actresses, and I shall cease to be worried and humiliated by what they say about me in the provincial newspapers."

"As for the newspapers," he retorted, "you have little to

complain of. They have treated *you* very well. And even if they annoyed you by a phrase here or there, surely the remedy is simple. You need not read them. You don't require any recommendation to the public now. As for your jealousy of other actresses—that was always an unreasonable vexation on your part——"

"Yes, and that only made it the more humiliating to myself," said she quickly.

"But think of this," said he. "You are married. You have been long away from the scene of your former triumphs. Some day you go to the theatre; and you find as the favourite of the public a woman who, you can see, cannot come near to what you used to do. And I suppose you won't be jealous of her, and anxious to defeat her on the old ground?"

She winced a little; but she said—

"I can do with that as you suggested about the newspapers: I need not go to the theatre."

"Very well, Gerty. I hope all will be for the best. But do not be in a hurry; take time and consider."

She saw clearly enough that this calm acquiescence was all the congratulation or advice she was likely to get; and she went to the door.

"Papa," said she, with a little hesitation, "Sir Keith Macleod is coming up to-morrow morning—to go to church with us."

"Yes?" said he indifferently.

"He may speak to you before we go."

"Very well. Of course, I have nothing to say in the matter. You are mistress of your own actions."

She went to her own room, and locked herself in, feeling very lonely, and disheartened, and miserable. There was more to alarm her in her father's faintly expressed doubts than in all Carry's vehement opposition and taunts. Why had Macleod left her alone?—If only she could see him laugh, her courage would be reassured.

Then she bethought her that this was not a fit mood for one who had promised to be the wife of a Macleod. She went to the mirror and regarded herself; and almost unconsciously an expression of pride and resolve appeared about the lines of her

mouth. And she would show to herself that still she had a woman's feeling by going out and doing some actual work of charity; she would prove to herself that the constant simulation of noble emotions had not deadened them in her own nature. She put on her hat and shawl, and went down-stairs, and went out into the free air and the sunlight—without a word to Carry or her father. She was trying to imagine herself as having already left the stage and all its fictitious allurements. She was now Lady Bountiful: having looked after the simple cares of her household she was now ready to cast her eyes abroad and relieve in so far as she might the distress around her. The first object of charity she encountered was an old crossing-sweeper. She addressed him in a matter-of-fact way which was intended to conceal her fluttering self-consciousness. She inquired whether he had a wife; whether he had any children; whether they were not rather poor. And having been answered in the affirmative on all these points, she surprised the old man by giving him five shillings and telling him to go home and get a good warm dinner for his family. She passed on and did not observe that, as soon as her back was turned, the old wretch made straight for the nearest public-house.

But her heart was happy and her courage rose. It was not for nothing, then, that she had entertained the bold resolve of casting aside for ever the one great ambition of her life—with all its intoxicating successes, and hopes, and struggles—for the homely and simple duties of an ordinary woman's existence. It was not in vain that she had read and dreamed of the far romantic land, and had ventured to think of herself as the proud wife of Macleod of Dare. Those fierce deeds of valour and vengeance that had terrified and thrilled her would now become part of her own inheritance; why, she could tell her friends, when they came to see her, of all the old legends and fairy stories that belonged to her own home. And the part of Lady Bountiful—surely, if she must play some part, that was the one she would most dearly like to play. And the years would go by; and she would grow silver-haired too; and when she lay on her deathbed she would take her husband's hand and say, "Have I lived the life you wished me to live?" Her cheerfulness grew

apace; and the walking, and the sunshine, and the fresh air brought a fine light and colour to her eyes and cheeks. There was a song singing through her head: and it was all about the brave Glenogie who rode up the king's ha'.

But as she turned the corner of a street her eye rested on a huge coloured placard—rested but for a moment, for she would not look on the gaudy thing. Just at this time a noble lord had shown his interest in the British drama by spending an enormous amount of money in producing, at a theatre of his own building, a spectacular burlesque, the gorgeousness of which surpassed anything that had ever been done in that way. And the lady who appeared to be playing (in silence, mostly) the chief part in this hash of glaring colour and roaring music and clashing armour had gained a great celebrity by reason of her handsome figure, and the splendour of her costume, and the magnificence of the real diamonds that she wore. All London was talking of her; and the vast theatre—even in November—was nightly crammed to overflowing. As Gertrude White walked back to her home her heart was filled with bitterness. She had caught sight of the ostentatious placard; and she knew that the photograph of the actress who was figuring there was in every stationer's shop in the Strand. And that which galled her was not that the theatre should be so taken and so used, but that the stage heroine of the hour should be a woman who could act no more than any baboon in the Zoological Gardens.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN SUSSEX.

But as for him, there was no moderation at all in the vehemence of his joy. In the surprise and bewilderment of it, the world around him underwent transfiguration: London in November was glorified into an earthly paradise. The very people in the

streets seemed to have kindly faces; Bury Street, St. James's—which is usually a somewhat misty thoroughfare—was more beautiful than the rose-garden of an eastern king. And on this Saturday afternoon the blue skies did indeed continue to shine over the great city; and the air seemed sweet and clear enough, as it generally does to any one whose every heart-beat is only another throb of conscious gladness.

In this first intoxication of wonder, and pride, and gratitude, he had forgotten all about the ingenious theories which, in former days, he had constructed to prove to himself that Gertrude White should give up her present way of life. Was it true, then, that he had rescued the white slave? Was it once and for ever that Nature, encountering the subtle demon of Art, had closed and wrestled with the insidious thing, had seized it by the throat, and choked it, and flung it aside from the fair roadway of life? He had forgotten about those theories now. All that he was conscious of was this eager joy, with now and again a wild wonder that he should indeed have acquired so priceless a possession. Was it possible that she would really withdraw herself from the eyes of all the world and give herself to him alone?—that some day, in the beautiful and laughing future, the glory of her presence would light up the sombre halls of Castle Dare?

Of course he poured all his pent-up confidences into the ear of the astonished Major, and again and again expressed his gratitude to his companion for having given him the opportunity of securing this transcendent happiness. The Major was somewhat frightened. He did not know in what measure he might be regarded as an accomplice by the silver-haired lady of Castle Dare. And in any case he was alarmed by the vehemence of the young man.

"My dear Macleod," said he with an oracular air, "you never have any hold on yourself. You fling the reins on the horse's neck, and gallop down-hill: a very slight check would send you whirling to the bottom. Now, you should take the advice of a man of the world, who is older than you, and who—if I may say so—has kept his eyes open. I don't want to discourage you; but you should take it for granted that accidents may happen.

I would feel the reins a little bit, if I were you. Once you've got her into the church—and see her with a white veil over her head—then you may be as perfervid as you like——"

And so the simple-minded Major prattled on; Macleod paying but little heed. There had been nothing about Major Stewart's courtship and marriage to shake the world: why, he said to himself, when the lady was pleased to lend a favouring ear, was there any reason for making such a fuss?

"Your happiness will all depend on one thing," said he to Macleod, with a complacent wisdom in the round and jovial face. "Take my word for it. I hear of people studying the character—the compatibilities and what not—of other people; but I never knew of a young man thinking of such things when he was in love. He plunges in, and finds out afterwards. Now, it all comes to this—is she likely, or not likely, to prove a sigher?"

"A what?" said Macleod, apparently awaking from a trance.

"A sigher. A woman who goes about the house all day sighing—whether over your sins or her own, she won't tell you."

"Indeed I cannot say," Macleod said, laughing. "I should hope not. I think she has excellent spirits."

"Ah!" said the Major thoughtfully; and he himself sighed; perhaps he was thinking of a certain house far away in Mull, to which he had shortly to return.

Macleod did not know how to show his gratitude towards this good-natured friend. He would have given him half-a-dozen banquets a day; and Major Stewart liked a London dinner. But what he did offer as a great reward was this: that Major Stewart should go up the next morning to a particular church, and take up a particular position in that church, and then—then he would get a glimpse of the most wonderful creature the world had seen. Oddly enough, the Major did not eagerly accept this munificent offer. To another proposal—that he should go up to Mr. White's on the first day after their return from Sussex, and meet the young lady at luncheon—he seemed better inclined.

"But why shouldn't we go to the theatre to-night?" said he in his simple way.

Macleod looked embarrassed.

"Frankly, then, Stewart," said he, "I don't want you to make her acquaintance as an actress."

'Oh, very well," said he, not greatly disappointed. "Perhaps it is better. You see, I may be questioned at Castle Dare. Have you considered that matter?"

"Oh no!" Macleod said lightly and cheerfully; "I have had time to consider nothing as yet. I can scarcely believe it to be all real. It takes a deal of hard thinking to convince myself that I am not dreaming."

But the true fashion in which Macleod showed his gratitude to his friend was in concealing his great reluctance on going down with him into Sussex. It was like rending his heart-strings for him to leave London for a single hour at this time. What beautiful confidences, and tender timid looks, and sweet small words he was leaving behind him, in order to go and shoot a lot of miserable pheasants! He was rather gloomy when he met the Major at the Victoria Station. They got into the train; and away through the darkness of the November afternoon they rattled to Three Bridges; but all the eager sportsman had gone out of him, and he had next to nothing to say in answer to the Major's excited questions. Occasionally he would rouse himself from his reverie, and he would talk in a perfunctory sort of fashion about the immediate business of the moment. He confessed that he had a certain theoretical repugnance to a *battue*, if it were at all like what people in the newspapers declared it to be. On the other hand, he could not well understand—judging by his experiences in the Highlands—how the shooting of driven birds could be so marvellously easy; and he was not quite sure that the writers he had referred to had had many opportunities of practising, or even observing, so very expensive an amusement. Major Stewart, for his part, freely admitted that he had no scruples whatever. Shooting birds, he roundly declared, was shooting birds, whether you shoot two or two score. And he demurely hinted that, if he had his choice, he would rather shoot the two score.

"Mind you, Stewart," Macleod said, "if we are posted anywhere near each other, mind you shoot at any bird that comes

my way. I should like you to make a big bag that you may talk about in Mull; and I don't really care about it."

And this was the man whom Miss Carry had described as being nothing but a slayer of wild animals and a preserver of beasts' skins! Perhaps in that imaginary duel between Nature and Art the enemy was not so thoroughly beaten and thrown aside after all.

So they got to Three Bridges; and there they found the carriage awaiting them; and presently they were whirling away along the dark roads, with the lamps shining now on a line of hedge and again on a long stretch of ivied brick-wall. And at last they passed a lodge-gate; and drove through a great and silent park; and finally, rattling over the gravel, drew up in front of some grey steps and a blaze of light coming from the wide-open doors. Under Lord Beauregard's guidance, they went into the drawing-room, and found a number of people idly chatting there, or reading by the subdued light of the various lamps on the small tables. There was a good deal of talk about the weather. Macleod, vaguely conscious that these people were only strangers, and that the one heart that was thinking of him was now far away, paid but little heed; if he had been told that the barometer predicted fifteen thunder-storms for the morrow, he would have been neither startled nor dismayed.

But he managed to say to his host, aside—

"Beauregard, look here. I suppose in this sort of shooting you have some little understanding with your head-keeper about the posts—who is to be a bit favoured, you know? Well, I wish you would ask him to look after my friend Stewart. He can leave me out altogether, if he likes."

"My dear fellow, there will be scarcely any difference; but I will look after your friend myself. I suppose you have no guns with you?"

"I have borrowed Ogilvie's. Stewart has none."

"I will get one for him."

By and by they went up-stairs to their respective rooms, and Macleod was left alone—that is to say, he was scarcely aware of the presence of the man who was opening his portmanteau and

putting out his things. He lay back in the low easy-chair, and stared absently into the blazing fire. This was a beautiful but a lonely house. There were many strangers in it. But if she had been one of the people below—if he could at this moment look forward to meeting her at dinner—if there was a chance of his sitting beside her and listening to the low and sweet voice—with what an eager joy he would have waited for the sound of the bell! As it was, his heart was in London. He had no sort of interest in this big house; or in the strangers whom he had met; or in the proceedings of the morrow, about which all the men were talking. It was a lonely house.

He was aroused by a tapping at the door.

"Come in," he said—and Major Stewart entered, blooming and roseate over his display of white linen.

"Good gracious!" said he, "aren't you dressed yet? It wants but ten minutes to dinner-time. What have you been doing?"

Macleod jumped up with some shamefacedness, and began to array himself quickly.

"Macleod," said the Major, subsiding into the big arm-chair very carefully, so as not to crease his shining shirt-front, "I must give you another piece of advice. It is serious. I have heard again and again that when a man thinks only of one thing—when he keeps brooding over it day and night—he is bound to become mad. They call it monomania. You are becoming a monomaniac."

"Yes, I think I am," Macleod said, laughing; "but it is a very pleasant sort of monomania, and I am not anxious to become sane. But you really must not be hard on me, Stewart. You know this is rather an important thing that has happened to me; and it wants a good deal of thinking over."

"Bah!" the Major cried, "why take it so much *au grand sérieux?* A girl likes you; says she'll marry you; probably, if she continues in the same mind, she will. Consider yourself a lucky dog; and don't break your heart if an accident occurs. Hope for the best; that you and she mayn't quarrel; and that she mayn't prove a sigher. Now what do you think of this house? I consider it an uncommon good dodge to put each person's name outside his bedroom-door; there can't be any

confounded mistakes — and women squealing — if you come up late at night. Why, Macleod, you don't mean that this affair has destroyed all your interest in the shooting? Man, I have been down to the gun-room with your friend Beauregard; have seen the head-keeper; got a gun that suits me first-rate—a trifle long in the stock perhaps, but no matter. You won't tip any more than the head-keeper, eh? And the fellow who carries your cartridge-bag? I do think it uncommonly civil of a man, not only to ask you to go shooting, but find you in guns and cartridges as well; don't you?"

The Major chatted on with great cheerfulness. He clearly considered that he had got into excellent quarters. At dinner he told some of his most famous Indian stories to Lady Beauregard, near whom he was sitting; and at night, in the smoking-room, he was great on deer-stalking. It was not necessary for Macleod, or anybody else, to talk. The Major was in full flow, though he stoutly refused to touch the spirits on the table. He wanted a clear head and a steady hand for the morning.

Alas! alas! The next morning presented a woful spectacle. Grey skies—heavy and rapidly drifting clouds—pouring rain—runnels of clear water by the side of every gravel-path—a rook or two battling with the squally south-wester high over the wide and desolate park—the wild duck at the margin of the ruffled lake flapping their wings as if the wet was too much even for them—nearer at hand the firs and evergreens all dripping. After breakfast the male guests wandered disconsolately into the cold billiard-room, and began knocking the balls about. All the loquacious cheerfulness of the Major had fled. He looked out on the wet park and the sombre woods; and sighed.

But about twelve o'clock there was a great hurry and confusion throughout the house; for all of a sudden the skies in the west cleared; there was a glimmer of blue; and then gleams of a pale wan light began to stream over the landscape. There was a rush to the gun-room and an eager putting-on of shooting-boots and leggings; there was a rapid tying-up of small packages of sandwiches; presently the waggonette was at the door. And then away they went over the hard gravel, and out into the

wet roads; with the sunlight now beginning to light up the beautiful woods about Crawley. The horses seemed to know there was no time to lose. A new spirit took possession of the party. The Major's face glowed as red as the hip that here and there among the almost leafless hedges shone in the sunlight on the ragged brier-stem.

And yet it was about one o'clock before the work of the day began, for the beaters had to be summoned from various parts, and the small boys with the white flags—the "stops"—had to be posted so as to check runners. And then the six guns went down over a ploughed field—half clay and half chalk, and ankle deep—to the margin of a rapidly running and coffee-coloured stream, which three of them had to cross by means of a very shaky plank. Lord Beauregard, Major Stewart, and Macleod remained on this side, keeping a look-out for a straggler, but chiefly concerned with the gradually opening and brightening sky. Then far away they heard a slight tapping on the trees; and almost at the same moment another sound caused the hearts of the two novices to jump. It was a quick *cuck-cuck*, accompanied by a rapid and silken winnowing of the air. Then an object, which seemed like a cannon-ball with a long tail attached, came whizzing along. Major Stewart fired—a bad miss. Then he wheeled round, took good aim, and down came a mass of feathers, whirling, until it fell motionless on the ground.

"Well hit!" Macleod cried; but at the same moment he became conscious that he had better mind his own business, for there was another whirring sound, and then he saw this rapidly enlarging object coming straight at him. He fired, and shot the bird dead; but so rapid was its flight that he had to duck his head as the slain bird drove past his face and tumbled on to the ground behind him.

"This is rather like firing at bomb-shells," he called out to Lord Beauregard.

It was certainly a new experience for Macleod to figure as a novice in any matter connected with shooting; but both the Major and he speedily showed that they were not unfamiliar with the use of a gun. Whether the birds came at them like bomb-shells, or sprung like a sky-rocket through the leafless

branches, they met with the same polite attention; though occasionally one would double back on the beaters and get clear away, sailing far into the silver-clear sky. Lord Beauregard scarcely shot at all, unless he was fairly challenged by a bird flying right past him; he seemed quite content to see his friends having plenty of work; while, in the interest of the beaters, he kept calling out in a high monotone, "Shoot high! shoot high!" Then there was some motion among the brushwood; here and there a man or boy appeared; and finally the under-keeper with his retriever came across the stream to pick up the dead birds. That bit was done with: *vorwärts!*

"Well, Stewart," Macleod said, "what do you think of it? I don't see anything murderous or unsportsmanlike in this kind of shooting. Of course shooting with dogs is much prettier; and you don't get any exercise standing in a wet field; but the man who says that shooting these birds requires no skill at all—well, I should like to see him try."

"Macleod," said the Major gravely, as they plodded along, "you may think that I despise this kind of thing; but I don't. I give you my solemn word of honour that I don't. I will even go the length of saying that if Providence had blessed me with £50,000 a year I should be quite content to own a bit of country like this. I played the part of the wild mountaineer last night, you know; that was all very well——"

Here there was a loud call from Lord Beauregard, who was overtaking them—"*Hare! hare! Mark hare!*" The Major jumped round, put up his gun, and banged away—shooting far ahead in his eagerness. Macleod looked on; and did not even raise his gun.

"That comes of talking," the Major said gloomily. "And you—why didn't you shoot? I never saw you miss a hare in my life!"

"I was not thinking of it," Macleod said indifferently.

It was very soon apparent that he was thinking of something other than the shooting of pheasants or hares; for as they went from one wood to another during this beautiful brief November day he generally carried his gun over his shoulder—even when the whirring, bright-plumaged birds were starting from time to

time from the hedge-rows—and devoted most of his attention to warning his friend when and where to shoot. However, an incident occurred which entirely changed the aspect of affairs. At one beat he was left quite alone—posted in an open space of low brushwood close by the corner of a wood. He rested the butt of his gun on his foot; he was thinking, not of any pheasant or hare, but of the beautiful picture Gertrude White would make if she were coming down one of these open glades, between the green stems of the trees, with the sunlight around her and the fair sky overhead. Idly he watched the slowly-drifting clouds; they were going away northward—by and by they would sail over London. The rifts of blue widened in the clear silver; surely the sunlight would now be shining over Regent's Park? Occasionally a pheasant came clattering along; he only regarded the shining colours of its head and neck brilliant in the sunlight. A hare trotted by him; he let it go. But while he was standing thus, and vaguely listening to the rattle of guns on the other side, he was suddenly startled by a quick cry of pain; and he thought he heard some one call "Macleod! Macleod!" Instantly he put his gun against a bush; and ran. He found a hedge at the end of the wood; he drove through it, and got into the open field. There was the unlucky Major, with blood running down his face, a handkerchief in his hand, and two men beside him—one of them offering him some brandy from a flask. However, after the first fright was over it was seen that Major Stewart was but slightly hurt. The youngest member of the party had fired at a bird coming out of the wood; had missed it; had tried to wheel round to send the second barrel after it; but his feet, having sunk into the wet clay, had caught there, and in his stumbling fall, somehow or other the second barrel went off, one pellet just catching the Major under the eye. The surface wound caused a good shedding of blood, but that was all; and when the Major had got his face washed, he shouldered his gun again, and with indomitable pluck said he would see the thing out. It was nothing but a scratch, he declared. It might have been dangerous; but what was the good of considering what might have been? To the young man who had been the cause of the accident, and who was quite unable to express his

profound sorrow and shame, he was generously considerate, saying that he had a mind to fine him in the sum of one penny by taking a postage-stamp to cover the wound.

"Lord Beauregard," said he, cheerfully, "I want you to show me a thorough-going hot corner. You know I am an ignoramus at this kind of thing."

"Well," said his host, "there is a good bit along here—if you would rather go on."

"Go on?" said he. "Of course!"

And it was a "hot corner." They came to it at the end of a long double hedge-row connected with the wood they had just beaten; and as there was no "stop" at the corner of the wood, the pheasants, in large numbers, had run into the channel between the double line of hedge. Here they were followed by the keepers and beaters, who kept gently driving them along. Occasionally one got up, and was instantly knocked over by one of the guns; but it was evident that the "hot corner" would be at the end of this hedge-row, where there was stationed a smock-frocked rustic who, down on his knees, was gently tapping with a bit of stick. The number of birds getting up increased, so that the six guns had pretty sharp work to reckon with them; and not a few of the wildly whirring objects got clean away into the next wood—Lord Beauregard all the time calling out from the other side of the hedge, "Shoot high! shoot high!" But at the end of the hedge-row an extraordinary scene occurred. One after the other—then in twos and threes—the birds sprung high over the bushes; the rattle of musketry—all the guns being together now—was deafening; the air was filled with gun-powder-smoke; and every second or two another bird came tumbling down on to the young corn. Macleod, with a sort of derisive laugh, put his gun over his shoulder.

"This is downright stupidity," he said to Major Stewart, who was blazing away as hard as ever he could cram cartridges into the hot barrels of his gun. You can't tell whether you are hitting the bird or not. There! Three men fired at that bird—and the other two were not touched."

The fusillade lasted for about eight or ten minutes; and then it was discovered that though certainly two or three hundred

pheasants had got up at this corner, only twenty-two and a half brace were killed—to five guns.

"Well," said the Major, taking off his cap and wiping his forehead, "that was a bit of a scrimmage."

"Perhaps," said Macleod, who had been watching with some amusement his friend's fierce zeal; "but it was not shooting. I defy you to say how many birds you shot. Or I will do this with you—I will bet you a sovereign that, if you ask each man to tell you how many birds he has shot during the day, and add them all up, the total will be twice the number of birds the keepers will take home. But I am glad you seem to enjoy it, Stewart."

"To tell you the truth, Macleod," said the other, "I think I have had enough of it. I don't want to make a fuss; but I fancy I don't quite see clearly with this eye—it may be only some slight inflammation—but I think I will go back to the house, and see if there's any surgeon in the neighbourhood."

"There you are right; and I will go back with you," Macleod said promptly.

When their host heard of this, he was for breaking up the party; but Major Stewart warmly remonstrated; and so one of the men was sent with the two friends to show them the way back to the house. When the surgeon came he examined the wound and pronounced it to be slight enough in itself, but possibly dangerous when so near so sensitive an organ as the eye. He advised the Major, if any symptoms of inflammation declared themselves, to go at once to a skilful oculist in London, and not to leave for the north until he was assured.

"That sounds rather well, Macleod," said he ruefully.

"Oh, if you must remain in London—though I hope not—I will stay with you," Macleod said. It was a great sacrifice—his remaining in London, instead of going at once back to Castle Dare; but what will not one do for one's friend?



TWILIGHT IN SUSSEX.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN INTERVIEW.

On the eventful morning on which Major Stewart was to be presented to the chosen bride of Macleod of Dare, the simple-hearted soldier—notwithstanding that he had a shade over one eye — made himself exceedingly smart. He would show the young lady that Macleod's friends in the north were not barbarians. The Major sent back his boots to be brushed a second time. A more smoothly-fitting pair of gloves Bond Street never saw.

"But you have not the air," said he to Macleod, "of a young fellow going to see his sweetheart. What is the matter, man?"

Macleod hesitated for a moment.

"Well, I am anxious she should impress you favourably," said he frankly, "and it is an awkward position for her—and she will be embarrassed, no doubt—and I have some pity for her, and almost wish some other way had been taken——"

"Oh, nonsense," the Major said, cheerfully, "you need not be nervous on her account. Why, man, the silliest girl in the world could impose on an old fool like me. Once upon a time, perhaps, I may have considered myself a connoisseur—well, you know, Macleod, I once was near as slim as yourself; but now, bless you, if a tolerably pretty girl only says a civil word or two to me I begin to regard her as if I were her guardian angel—*in loco parentis*, and that kind of thing—and I would sooner hang myself than scan her dress or say a word about her figure. Do you think she will be afraid of a critic with one eye? Have courage, man! I dare bet a sovereign she is quite capable of taking care of herself. It's her business."

Macleod flushed quickly; and the one eye of the Major caught that sudden confession of shame or resentment.

"What I meant was," he said instantly, "that nature had taught the simplest of virgins a certain trick of fence—oh yes, don't you be afraid. Embarrassment! If there is any one

embarrassed, it will not be me, and it will not be she. Why, she'll begin to wonder whether you are really one of the Macleods if you show yourself nervous, apprehensive, frightened like this."

"And indeed, Stewart," said he, rising as if to shake off some weight of gloomy feeling, "I scarcely know what is the matter with me. I ought to be the happiest man in the world: and sometimes this very happiness seems so great that it is like to suffocate me—I cannot breathe fast enough; and then again I get into such unreasoning fears and troubles—well, let us get out into the fresh air."

The Major carefully smoothed his hat once more, and took up his cane. He followed Macleod down-stairs—like Sancho Panza waiting on Don Quixote, as he himself expressed it; and then the two friends slowly sauntered away northward, on this fairly clear and pleasant December morning.

"Your nerves are not in a healthy state, that's the fact, Macleod," said the Major, as they walked along. "The climate of London is too exciting for you; a good, long, dull winter in Mull will restore your tone. But in the mean time don't cut my throat, or your own, or anybody else's."

"Am I likely to do that?" Macleod said, laughing.

"There was young Bouverie," the Major continued, not heeding the question,—"what a handsome young fellow he was when he joined us at Gawulpoor—and he hadn't been in the place a week but he must needs go regular head over heels about our colonel's sister-in-law. An uncommon pretty woman she was too—an Irish girl, and fond of riding; and dash me if that fellow didn't fairly try to break his neck again and again just that she should admire his pluck. He was as mad as a hatter about her. Well, one day two or three of us had been riding for two or three hours on a blazing hot morning, and we came to one of the irrigation reservoirs—big wells, you know—and what does he do but offer to bet twenty pounds he would dive into the well and swim about for five minutes, till we hoisted him out at the end of the rope. I forget who took the bet—for none of us thought he would do it: but I believe he would have done anything so that the story of his pluck might be carried to the girl, don't you know. Well, off went his clothes, and in he jumped into the ice-cold water.

Nothing would stop him. But at the end of the five minutes when we hoisted up the rope, there was no Bouverie there. It appeared that on clinging on to the rope he had twisted it somehow, and suddenly found himself about to have his neck broken, so he had to shake himself free and plunge into the water again. When at last we got him out, he had had a longer bath than he had bargained for; but there was apparently nothing the matter with him—and he had won the bet, and there would be a talk about him. However, two days afterwards, when he was at dinner, he suddenly felt as though he had got a blow on the back of the head—so he told us afterwards—and fell back insensible. That was the beginning of it. It took him five or six years to shake off the effects of that dip——"

"And did she marry him after all?" Macleod said eagerly.

"Oh dear no. I think he had been invalided home not more than two or three months when she married Connolly, of the 71st Madras Infantry. Then she ran away from him with some civilian fellow; and Connolly blew his brains out. That," said the Major, honestly, "is always a puzzle to me. How a fellow can be such an ass as to blow his brains out when his wife runs away from him beats my comprehension altogether. Now what I should do would be this; I should thank goodness I was rid of such a piece of baggage; I would get all the good fellows I know, and give them a rattling fine dinner; and I would drink a bumper to her health, and another bumper to her never coming back."

"And I would send you our Donald, and he would play *Cha till mi tuilich* for you," Macleod said.

"But as for blowing my brains out! Well," the Major, added, with a philosophic air, "when a man is mad he cares neither for his own life nor for anybody else's. Look at those cases you continually see in the papers: a young man is in love with a young woman; they quarrel, or she prefers some one else; what does he do but lay hold of her some evening and cut her throat—to show his great love for her—and then he coolly gives himself up to the police and says he is quite content to be hanged."

"Stewart," said Macleod, laughing, "I don't like this talk

about hanging. You said a minute or two ago that I was mad."

"More or less," observed the Major, with absolute gravity,—"as the lawyer said when he mentioned the Fifteen-acre Park at Dublin."

"Well, let us get into a hansom," Macleod said. "When I am hanged you will ask them to write over my tombstone that I never kept anybody waiting for either luncheon or dinner."

The smart maid-servant who opened the door greeted Macleod with a pleasant smile; she was a sharp wench, and had discovered that lovers have lavish hands. She showed the two visitors into the drawing-room; Macleod silent, and listening intently, the one-eyed Major observing everything, and perhaps curious to know whether the house of an actress differed from that of anybody else. He very speedily came to the conclusion that, in his small experience, he had never seen any house of its size so tastefully decorated and accurately managed as this simple home.

"But what's this!" he cried, going to the mantelpiece and taking down a drawing that was somewhat ostentatiously placed there. "Well! if this is English hospitality! By Jove! an insult to me, and my father, and my father's clan—that blood alone will wipe out! *The astonishment of Sandy MacAlister Mhor on beholding a glimpse of sunlight:* look!"

He showed this rude drawing to Macleod—a sketch of a wild Highlander, with his hair on end, his eyes starting out of his head, and his hands uplifted in bewilderment. This work of art was the production of Miss Carry, who, on hearing the knock at the door, had whipped into the room, placed her bit of savage satire over the mantelpiece, and whipped out again. But her deadly malice so far failed of its purpose that, instead of inflicting any annoyance, it most effectually broke the embarrassment of Miss Gertrude's entrance and introduction to the Major.

"Carry has no great love for the Highlands," she said, laughing and slightly blushing at the same time, "but she need not have prepared so cruel a welcome for you. Won't you sit down, Major Stewart? Papa will be here directly."

"I think it is uncommonly clever," the Major said, fixing his one eye on the paper as if he would give Miss White distinctly

to understand that he had not come to stare at her. "Perhaps she will like us better when she knows more about us."

"Do you think," said Miss White demurely, "that it is possible for any one born in the south to learn to like the bagpipes?"

"No," said Macleod quickly, and it was not usual for him to break in in this eager way about a usual matter of talk, "that is all a question of association. If you had been brought up to associate the sound of the pipes with every memorable thing—with the sadness of a funeral, and the welcome of friends come to see you, and the pride of going away to war, then you would understand why the *Cogadh na Sith*, or the *Failte Phrionsa*, or that one that is called *I had a Kiss of the King's Hand*—why these bring the tears to a Highlander's eyes. The pibrochs preserve our legends for us," he went on to say, in rather an excited fashion—for he was obviously nervous, and perhaps a trifle paler than usual. "They remind us of what our families have done in all parts of the world; and there is not one you do not associate with some friend or relative who is gone away; or with some great merrymaking; or with the death of one who was dear to you. You never saw that—the boat taking the coffin across the loçh, and the friends of the dead sitting with bent heads, and the piper at the bow playing the slow Lament to the time of the oars—if you had seen that you would know what the *Cumhadh Mhic an Toiseach* is to a Highlander. And if you have a friend come to see you, what is it first tells you of his coming? When you can hear nothing for the waves, you can hear the pipes! And if you were going into a battle, what would put madness into your head but to hear the march that you know your brothers and uncles and cousins last heard when they marched on with a cheer to take death as it happened to come to them? You might as well wonder at the Highlanders loving the heather. That is not a very handsome flower."

Miss White was sitting quite calm and collected. A covert glance or two had convinced the Major that she was entirely mistress of the situation. If there was any one nervous, embarrassed, excited throughout this interview, it was not Miss Gertrude White.

"The other morning," she said complacently—and she pulled down her dainty white cuffs another sixteenth of an inch—"I was going along Buckingham Palace Road, and I met a detachment—is a detachment right, Major Stewart?—of a Highland regiment. At least I supposed it was part of a Highland regiment, because they had eight pipers playing at their head; and I noticed that the cab-horses were far more frightened than they would have been at twice the noise coming from an ordinary band. I was wondering whether they might think it the roar of some strange animal—you know how a camel frightens a horse. But I envied the officer who was riding in the front of the soldiers. He was a very handsome man; and I thought how proud he must feel to be at the head of those fine, stalwart fellows. In fact, I felt for a moment that I should like to have command of a regiment myself."

"Faith," said the Major gallantly, "I would exchange into that regiment if I had to serve as a drummer-boy."

Embarrassed by this broad compliment? Not a bit of it. She laughed lightly; and then rose to introduce the two visitors to her father, who had just entered the room.

It was not to be expected that Mr. White, knowing the errand of his guests, should give them an inordinately effusive welcome. But he was gravely polite. He prided himself on being a man of common sense; and he knew it was no use fighting against the inevitable. If his daughter would leave the stage, she would; and there was some small compensation in the fact that by her doing so she would become Lady Macleod. He would have less money to spend on trinkets two hundred years old; but he would gain something—a very little, no doubt—from the reflected lustre of her social position.

"We were talking about officers, papa," she said brightly, "and I was about to confess that I have always had a great liking for soldiers. I know if I had been a man I should have been a soldier. But do you know, Sir Keith, you were once very rude to me about your friend Lieutenant Ogilvie?"

Macleod started.

"I hope not," said he, gravely.

"Oh yes, you were. Don't you remember the Caledonian

Ball? I only remarked that Lieutenant Ogilvie, who seemed to me a bonnie boy, did not look as if he were a very formidable warrior; and you answered with some dark saying—what was it?—that nobody could tell what sword was in a scabbard until it was drawn?"

"Oh," said he, laughing somewhat nervously, "you forget: I was talking to the Duchess of Devonshire."

"And I am sure her Grace was much obliged to you for frightening her so," Miss White said with a dainty smile.

Major Stewart was greatly pleased by the appearance and charming manner of this young lady. If Macleod, who was confessedly a handsome young fellow, had searched all over England, he could not have chosen a fitter mate. But he was also distinctly of opinion—judging by his one eye only—that nobody needed to be alarmed about this young lady's exceeding sensitiveness and embarrassment before strangers. He thought she would on all occasions be fairly capable of holding her own. And he was quite convinced too that the beautiful, clear eyes, under the long lashes, pretty accurately divined what was going forward. But what did this impression of the honest soldier's amount to? Only, in other words, that Miss Gertrude White, though a pretty woman, was not a fool.

Luncheon was announced, and they went into the other room, accompanied by Miss Carry, who had suffered herself to be introduced to Major Stewart with a certain proud sedateness. And now the Major played the part of the accepted lover's friend to perfection. He sate next Miss White herself; and no matter what the talk was about, he managed to bring it round to something that redounded to Macleod's advantage. Macleod could do this, and Macleod could do that; it was all Macleod, and Macleod, and Macleod.

"And if you should ever come to our part of the world, Miss White," said the Major—not letting his glance meet hers—"you will be able to understand something of the old loyalty and affection and devotion the people in the Highlands show to their chiefs; for I don't believe there is a man, woman, or child about the place who would not rather have a hand cut off than that Macleod should have a thorn scratch him. And it is all the

more singular, you know, that they are not Macleods. Mull is the country of the Macleans; and the Macleans and the Macleods had their fights in former times. There is a cave they will show you round the point from *Ru na Gaul* lighthouse that is called *Uamh-na-Ceann*—that is, the Cavern of the Skulls—where the Macleods murdered fifty of the Macleans, though Alastair Crotach, the humpbacked son of Macleod, was himself killed."

"I beg your pardon, Major Stewart," said Miss Carry, with a grand stateliness in her tone, "but will you allow me to ask if this is true? It is a passage I saw quoted in a book the other day, and I copied it out. It says something about the character of the people you are talking about."

She handed him the bit of paper; and he read these words:—"*Trew it is, that thir Ilandish men ar of nature verie prowd, suspicious, avaricious, full of decept and evill inventioun each aganis his nychtbour, be what way soever he may circumvin him. Besydis all this, they ar sa crewall in taking of revenge that nather have they regard to person, eage, tyme, or caus; sa ar they generallie all sa far addictit to thair awin tyrannicall opinions that, in all respects, they exceed in creweltie the maist barbarous people that ever hes bene sen the begynning of the warld.*"

"Upon my word," said the honest Major, "it is a most formidable indictment. You had better ask Sir Keith about it."

He handed the paper across the table; Macleod read it, and burst out laughing.

"It is too true, Carry," said he. "We are a dreadful lot of people up there among the hills. Nothing but murder and rapine from morning till night."

"I was telling him this morning he would probably be hanged," observed the Major, gravely.

"For what?" Miss White asked.

"Oh," said the Major carelessly, "I did not specify the offence. Cattle-lifting, probably."

Miss Carry's fierce onslaught was thus laughed away, and they proceeded to other matters; the Major meanwhile not failing to remark that this luncheon differed considerably from the bread and cheese and glass of whisky of a shooting-day in Mull.

Then they returned to the drawing-room, and had tea there, and some further talk. The Major had by this time quite abandoned his critical and observant attitude. He had succumbed to the enchantress. He was ready to declare that Gertrude White was the most fascinating woman he had ever met, while, as a matter of fact, she had been rather timidly making suggestions and asking his opinion all the time. And when they rose to leave she said—

"I am very sorry, Major Stewart, that this unfortunate accident should have altered your plans; but since you must remain in London, I hope we shall see you often before you go."

"You are very kind," said he.

"We cannot ask you to dine with us," she said, quite simply and frankly, "because of my engagements in the evening; but we are always at home at lunch-time, and Sir Keith knows the way."

"Thank you very much," said the Major, as he warmly pressed her hand.

The two friends passed out into the street.

"My dear fellow," said the Major, "you have been lucky—don't imagine I am humbugging you—a really handsome lass, and a thorough woman of the world too—trained and fitted at every point—none of your farm-yard beauties. But I say, Macleod, I say," he continued solemnly, "won't she find it a trifle dull at Castle Dare?—the change, you know."

"It is not necessary that she should live at Dare," Macleod said.

"Oh, of course, you know your own plans best."

"I have none. All that is in the air as yet. And so you do not think I have made a mistake?"

"I wish I was five-and-twenty, and could make a mistake like that," said the Major, with a sigh.

Meanwhile Miss Carry had confronted her sister.

"So you have been inspected, Gerty. Do you think you passed muster?"

"Go away, and don't be impertinent, you silly girl," said the other, good-naturedly.

Carry pulled a folded piece of paper from her pocket, an advancing, placed it on the table.

"There," said she, "put that in your purse, and don't tell me you have not been warned, Gertrude White."

The elder sister did as she was bid; but indeed she was not thinking at that moment of the cruel and revengeful character of the Western Highlanders, which Miss Carry's quotations set forth in such plain terms. She was thinking that she had never before seen Glenogie look so soldier-like and handsome.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT A RAILWAY STATION.

The few days of grace obtained by the accident that happened to Major Stewart fled too quickly away; and the time came for saying farewell. With a dismal apprehension Macleod looked forward to this moment. He had seen her on the stage bid a pathetic good-bye to her lover; and there it was beautiful enough—with her shy coquetries, and her winning ways, and the timid, reluctant confession of her love. But there was nothing at all beautiful about this ordeal through which he must pass. It was harsh and horrible. He trembled even as he thought of it.

The last day of his stay in London arrived; he rose with a sense of some awful doom hanging over him that he could in no wise shake off. It was a strange day too—the world of London vaguely shining through a pale fog, the sun a globe of red fire. There was hoar-frost on the window-ledges; at last the winter seemed about to begin.

And then, as ill-luck would have it, Miss White had some important business at the theatre to attend to, so that she could not see him till the afternoon; and he had to pass the empty morning somehow.

"You look like a man going to be hanged," said the Major, about noon; "come, shall we stroll down to the river now? We can have a chat with your friend before lunch, and a look over his boat."

Colonel Ross, being by chance at Erith, had heard of Macleod's being in town, and had immediately come up in his little steam yacht, the *Iris*, which now lay at anchor close to Westminster Bridge, on the Lambeth side. He had proposed, merely for the oddity of the thing, that Macleod and his friend the Major should lunch on board, and young Ogilvie had promised to run up from Aldershot.

"Macleod," said the gallant soldier, as the two friends walked leisurely down towards the Thames, "if you let this monomania get such a hold of you, do you know how it will end? You will begin to show signs of having a conscience."

"What do you mean?" said he, absently.

"Your nervous system will break down, and you will begin to have a conscience. That is a sure sign, in either a man or a nation. Man, don't I see it all around us now in this way of looking at India and the colonies? We had no conscience—we were in robust health as a nation—when we thrashed the French out of Canada; and seized India; and stole land just wherever we could put our fingers on it all over the globe; but now it is quite different—we are only educating these countries up to self-government—it is all in the interest of morality that we protect them—as soon as they wish to go we will give them our blessing—in short, we have got a conscience, because the national health is feeble and nervous. You look out, or you will get into the same condition. You will begin to ask whether it is right to shoot pretty little birds in order to eat them; you will become a vegetarian; and you will take to goloshes."

"Good gracious!" said Macleod, waking up, "what is this all about?"

"Rob Roy," observed the Major, oracularly, "was a healthy man. I will make you a bet he was not much troubled by chilblains."

"Stewart," Macleod cried, "do you want to drive me mad? What on earth are you talking about?"

"Anything," the Major confessed frankly, "to rouse you out of your monomania, because I don't want to have my throat cut by a lunatic some night up at Castle Dare."

"Castle Dare," repeated Macleod, gloomily. "I think I shall scarcely know the place again; and we have been away about a fortnight!"

No sooner had they got down to the landing-steps on the Lambeth side of the river than they were descried from the deck of the beautiful little steamer, and a boat was sent ashore for them. Colonel Ross was standing by the tiny gangway to receive them; they got on board, and passed into the glass-surrounded saloon. There certainly was something odd in the notion of being anchored in the middle of the great city; absolutely cut off from it and inclosed in a miniature floating world; the very sound of it hushed and remote. And, indeed, on this strange morning the big town looked more dream-like than usual as they regarded it from the windows of the saloon:—the buildings opal-like in the pale fog; a dusky glitter on the high towers of the Houses of Parliament; and some touches of rose-red on the ripples of the yellow water around them.

Right over there was the very spot to which he had idly wandered in the clear dawn, to have a look at the peacefully flowing stream. How long ago? It seemed to him, looking back, somehow the morning of life—shining clear and beautiful, before any sombre anxieties, and joys scarcely less painful, had come to cloud the fair sky. He thought of himself at that time with a sort of wonder. He saw himself standing there, glad to watch the pale and growing glory of the dawn, careless as to what the day might bring forth; and he knew that it was another and an irrecoverable Macleod he was mentally regarding.

Well, when his friend Ogilvie arrived, he endeavoured to assume some greater spirit and cheerfulness, and they had a pleasant enough luncheon-party in the gently-moving saloon. Thereafter Colonel Ross was for getting up steam and taking them for a run somewhere: but at this point Macleod begged to be excused for running away; and so having consigned Major Stewart to the care of his host for the moment, and having bade good-bye to Ogilvie, he went ashore. He made his way up to

the cottage in South Bank. He entered the drawing-room and sate down, alone.

When she came in, she said, with a quick anxiety—

"You are not ill?"

"No, no," he said, rising—and his face was haggard somewhat, "but it is not pleasant to come to say good-bye——"

"You must not take it so seriously as that," she said, with a friendly smile.

"My going away is like going into a grave," he said slowly; "it is dark."

And then he took her two hands in his, and regarded her with such an intensity of look that she almost drew back, afraid.

"Sometimes," he said, watching her eyes, "I think I shall never see you again."

"Oh, Keith," said she, drawing her hands away and speaking half playfully, "you really frighten me. And even if you were never to see me again, wouldn't it be a very good thing for you? You would have got rid of a bad bargain."

"It would not be a very good thing for me," he said, still regarding her.

"Oh, well, don't speak of it," said she, lightly; "let us speak of all that is to be done in the long time that must pass before we meet——"

"But why '*must*'?" he said eagerly. "Why '*must*'? If you knew how I look forward to the blackness of this winter away up there—so far away from you that I shall forget the sound of your voice—oh! you cannot know what it is to me!"

He had sat down again; his eyes, with a sort of pained and hunted look in them, bent on the floor.

"But there is a '*must*,' you know," she said cheerfully, "and we should be sensible folk and recognize it. You know I ought to have a probationary period, as it were—like a nun, you know, just to see if she is fit to——"

Here Miss White paused, with a little embarrassment; but presently she charged the difficulty, and said with a slight laugh—

"To take the veil, in fact. You must give me time to

become accustomed to a whole heap of things: if we were to do anything suddenly now, we might blunder into some great mistake, perhaps irretrievable. I must train myself by degrees for another kind of life altogether; and I am going to surprise you, Keith—I am indeed. If papa takes me to the Highlands next year, you won't recognize me at all. I am going to read up all about the Highlands, and learn the tartans, and the names of fishes and birds; and I will walk in the rain and try to think nothing about it; and perhaps I may learn a little Gaelic: indeed, Keith, when you see me in the Highlands, you will find me a thorough Highlandwoman."

"You will never become a Highlandwoman," he said, with a grave kindness. "Is it needful? I would rather see you as you are than playing a part."

Her eyes expressed some quick wonder, for he had almost quoted her father's words to her.

"You would rather see me as I am?" she said demurely. "But what am I? I don't know myself."

"You are a beautiful and gentle-hearted Englishwoman," he said, with honest admiration—"a daughter of the south. Why should you wish to be anything else? When you come to us, I will show you a true Highlandwoman—that is, my cousin Janet."

"Now you have spoiled all my ambition," she said somewhat petulantly. "I had intended spending all the winter in training myself to forget the habits and feelings of an actress; and I was going to educate myself for another kind of life; and now I find that when I go to the Highlands you will compare me with your cousin Janet!"

"That is impossible," said he absently, for he was thinking of the time when the summer seas would be blue again, and the winds soft, and the sky clear; and then he saw the long gig of the *Umpire* going merrily out to the great steamer to bring the beautiful stranger from the south to Castle Dare!

"Ah, well, I am not going to quarrel with you on this our last day together," she said, and she gently placed her soft white hand on the clenched fist that rested on the table. "I see you are in great trouble—I wish I could lessen it. And yet how

could I wish that you should think of me less, even during the long winter evenings, when it will be so much more lonely for you than for me? But you must leave me my hobby all the same; and you must think of me always as preparing myself and looking forward; for at least, you know you will expect me to be able to sing a Highland ballad to your friends!"

"Yes, yes," he said hastily, "if it is all true—if it is all possible—what you speak of. Sometimes I think it is madness of me to fling away my only chance; to have everything I care for in the world near me, and to go away and perhaps never return; sometimes I know in my heart that I shall never see you again—never after this day."

"Ah, now," said she brightly—for she feared this black demon getting possession of him again, "I will kill that superstition at once. You *shall* see me after to-day; for, as sure as my name is Gertrude White, I will go up to the railway-station to-morrow morning, and see you off. There!"

"You will?" he said, with a flush of joy on his face.

"But I don't want any one else to see me," she said, looking down.

"Oh, I will manage that," he said eagerly. "I will get Major Stewart into the carriage ten minutes before the train starts."

"Colonel Ross?"

"He goes back to Erith to night."

"And I will bring to the station," said she, with some shy colour in her face, "a little present—if you should speak of me to your mother you might give her this from me—it belonged to my mother."

Could anything have been more delicately devised than this tender and timid message?

"You have a woman's heart," he said.

And then in the same low voice she began to explain that she would like him to go to the theatre that evening; and that perhaps he would go alone; and would he do her the favour to be in a particular box? She took a piece of paper from her purse, and shyly handed it to him. How could he refuse?—though he flushed slightly. It was a favour she asked. "I will know where you are," she said.

And so he was not to bid good-bye to her on this occasion, after all. But he bade good-bye to Mr. White, and to Miss Carry, who was quite civil to him now that he was going away; and then he went out into the cold and grey December afternoon. They were lighting the lamps. But gaslight throws no cheerfulness on a grave.

He went to the theatre later on; and the talisman she had given him took him into a box almost level with the stage, and so near to it that the glare of the footlights bewildered his eyes until he retired into the corner. And once more he saw the puppets come and go; with the one live woman among them, whose every tone of voice made his heart leap. And then this drawing-room scene, in which she comes in alone, and talking to herself? She sits down to the piano, carelessly. Some one enters, unperceived, and stands silent there, to listen to the singing. And this air that she sings, waywardly, like a light-hearted school-girl?—

"Hi-ri-libhin o, Brave MacIntyre,
Hi-ri-libhin o, Costly thy wooing!
Thou'st slain the maid.
Hug-o-rin-o, 'Tis thy undoing.

"Hi-ri-libhin o, Friends of my love,
Hi-ri-libhin o, Do not upbraid him;
He was leal.
Hug-o-rin-o, Chance betrayed him."

Macleod's breathing came quick and hard. She had not sung this ballad of the brave MacIntyre when formerly he had seen the piece. Did she merely wish him to know—by this arch rendering of the gloomy song—that she was pursuing her Highland studies? And then the last verse she sang in the Gaelic! He was so near that he could hear this adjuration to the unhappy lover to seek his boat and fly, steering wide of Jura and avoiding Mull:—

"Hi-ri-libhin o, Buin Bàta,
Hi-ri-libhin o, Fàg an dùthaich,
Seacha'n Mule,
Hug-o-rin-o: Sna taodh Jura!"

Was she laughing, then, at her pronunciation of the Gaelic when she carelessly rose from the piano—and, in doing so, directed one glance towards him which made him quail? The foolish piece went on. She was more bright, vivacious, coquettish than ever: how could she have such spirits in view of the long separation that lay on his heart like lead? Then, at the end of the piece, there was a tapping at the door, and an envelope was handed in to him. It only contained a card, with the message "Good night!" scrawled in pencil. It was the last time he ever was in any theatre.

Then that next morning,—cold, and raw, and damp, with a blustering north-west wind that seemed to bring an angry summons from the far seas. At the station, his hand was trembling like the hand of a drunken man; his eyes wild and troubled; his face haggard. And as the moment arrived for the train to start, he became more and more excited.

"Come and take your place, Macleod," the Major said. "There is no use worrying about leaving. We have eaten our cake. The frolic is at an end. All we can do is to sing, 'Then fare you well, my Mary Blane,' and put up with whatever is ahead. If I could only have a drop of real, genuine Talisker to steady my nerves——"

But here the Major, who had been incidentally leaning out of the window, caught sight of a figure; and instantly he withdrew his head. Macleod disappeared.

That great, gaunt room—with the hollow footfalls of strangers, and the cries outside. His face was quite white when he took her hand.

"I am very late," she said, with a smile.

He could not speak at all. He fixed his eyes on hers with a strange intensity, as if he would read her very soul; and what could one find there but a great gentleness and sincerity, and the frank confidence of one who had nothing to conceal?

"Gertrude," said he at last, "whatever happens to us two, you will never forget that I loved you."

"I think I may be sure of that," she said, looking down.

They rang a bell outside.

"Good-bye, then."

He tightly grasped the hand he held; once more he gazed into those clear and confiding eyes—with an almost piteously-anxious look: then he kissed her, and hurried away. But she was bold enough to follow. Her eyes were moist. Her heart was beating fast. If Glenogie had there and then challenged her, and said, "*Come, then, sweetheart; will you fly with me? And the proud mother will meet you. And the gentle cousin will attend on you. And Castle Dare will welcome the young bride!*"—what would she have said? The moment was over. She only saw the train go gently away from the station; and she saw the piteous eyes fixed on hers; and while he was in sight she waved her handkerchief. When the train had disappeared, she turned away with a sigh.

"Poor fellow," she was thinking, "he is very much in earnest —far more in earnest than even poor Howson. It would break my heart if I were to bring him any trouble."

By the time she had got to the end of the platform, her thoughts had taken a more cheerful turn.

"Dear me," she was saying to herself, "I quite forgot to ask him whether my Gaelic was good."

When she had got into the street outside, the day was brightening.

"I wonder," she was asking herself, "whether Carry would come and look at that exhibition of water-colours; and how long should we be in getting there?"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A DISCLOSURE.

AND now he was all eagerness to brave the first dragon in his way—the certain opposition of this proud old lady at Castle Dare. No doubt she would stand aghast at the mere mention of such a thing; perhaps in her sudden indignation she might

utter sharp words that would rankle afterwards in the memory. In any case he knew the struggle would be long, and bitter, and harassing; and he had not the skill of speech to persuasively bend a woman's will. There was another way — impossible, alas!—he had thought of. If only he could have taken Gertrude White by the hand—if only he could have led her up the hall, and presented her to his mother, and said, "Mother, this is your daughter: is she not fit to be the daughter of so proud a mother?"—the fight would have been over. How could any one withstand the appeal of those fearless and tender clear eyes?

Impatiently he waited for the end of dinner on the evening of his arrival; impatiently he heard Donald, the piper lad, play the brave Salute—the wild shrill yell overcoming the low thunder of the Atlantic outside; and he paid but little attention to the old and familiar *Cumhadh na Cloinne.* Then Hamish put the whisky and the claret on the table; and withdrew. They were left alone.

"And now, Keith," said his cousin Janet, with the wise grey eyes grown cheerful and kind, "you will tell us about all the people you saw in London; and was there much gaiety going on; and did you see the Queen at all; and did you give any fine dinners?"

"How can I answer you all at once, Janet?" said he, laughing in a somewhat nervous way. "I did not see the Queen, for she was at Windsor; and I did not give any fine dinners, for it is not the time of year in London to give fine dinners; and indeed I spent enough money in that way when I was in London before. But I saw several of the friends who were very kind to me when I was in London in the summer. And do you remember, Janet, my speaking to you about the beautiful young lady — the actress — I met at the house of Colonel Ross of Duntorme?"

"Oh, yes, I remember very well."

"Because," said he—and his fingers were rather nervous as he took out a package from his breast-pocket—"I have got some photographs of her for the mother and you to see. But it is little of any one that you can understand from photographs. You would have to hear her talk, and see her manner, before

you could understand why every one speaks so well of her, and why she is a friend with every one——"

He had handed the packet to his mother, and the old lady had adjusted her eye-glasses, and was turning over the various photographs.

"She is very good-looking," said Lady Macleod. "Yes, she is very good-looking. And that is her sister?"

"Yes."

Janet was looking over them too.

"But where did you get the photographs of her, Keith?" she said. "They are from all sorts of places—Scarborough, Newcastle, Brighton——"

"I got them from herself," said he.

"Oh, do you know her so well?"

"I know her very well. She was an intimate friend of the people whose acquaintance I first made in London," he said, simply; and then he turned to his mother: "I wish photographs could speak, mother, for then you might make her acquaintance, and as she is coming to the Highlands next year——"

"We have no theatre in Mull, Keith," Lady Macleod said, with a smile.

"But by that time she will not be an actress at all: did I not tell you that before?" he said, eagerly. "Did I not tell you that? She is going to leave the stage—perhaps sooner or later, but certainly by that time; and when she comes to the Highlands next year with her father, she will be travelling just like any one else. And I hope, mother, you won't let them think that we Highlanders are less hospitable than the people of London."

He made the suggestion in an apparently careless fashion; but there was an anxious look in his eyes. Janet noticed that.

"It would be strange if they were to come to so unfrequented a place as the west of Mull," said Lady Macleod, somewhat coldly, as she put the photographs aside.

"But I have told them all about the place and what they will see; and they are eagerly looking forward to it; and you surely would not have them put up at the inn at Bunessan, mother?"

"Really, Keith, I think you have been imprudent. It was little matter our receiving a bachelor friend like Norman Ogilvie; but I don't think we are quite in a condition to entertain strangers at Dare."

"No one objected to me as a stranger when I went to London," said he, proudly.

"If they are anywhere in the neighbourhood," said Lady Macleod, "I should be pleased to show them all the attention in my power, as you say they were friendly with you in London; but really, Keith, I don't think you can ask me to invite two strangers to Dare——"

"Then it is to the inn at Bunessan they must go?" he asked.

"Now, auntie," said Janet Macleod, with her gentle voice, "you are not going to put poor Keith into a fix; I know you won't do that. I see the whole thing; it is all because Keith was so thorough a Highlander. They were talking about Scotland; and no doubt he said there was nothing in the country to be compared with our islands, and caves, and cliffs. And then they spoke of coming; and of course he threw open the doors of the house to them. He would not have been a Highlander if he had done anything else, auntie; and I know you won't be the one to make him break off an invitation. And if we cannot give them grand entertainments at Dare, we can give them a Highland welcome anyway."

This appeal to the Highland pride of the mother was not to be withstood.

"Very well, Keith," said she. "We shall do what we can for your friends; though it isn't much in this old place."

"She will not look at it that way," he said, eagerly. "I know that. She will be proud to meet you, mother; and to shake hands with you; and to go about with you, and do just whatever you are doing——"

Lady Macleod started.

"How long do you propose this visit should last?" she said.

"Oh, I don't know," said he, hastily. "But you know, mother, you would not hurry your guests; for I am sure you would be as proud as any one to show them that we have things worth seeing. We should take her to the cathedral at Iona on some

moonlight night; and then some day we could go out to the Dubh Artach lighthouse — and you know how the men are delighted to see a new face——"

"You would never think of that, Keith," his cousin said. "Do you think a London young lady would have the courage to be swung on to the rocks and to climb up all those steps outside?"

"She has the courage for that, or for anything," said he. "And, then, you know she would be greatly interested in the clouds of puffins and the skarts behind Staffa; and we would take her to the great caves in the cliffs at Gribun; and I have no doubt she would like to go out to one of the uninhabited islands."

Lady Macleod had preserved a stern silence. When she had so far yielded as to promise to ask those two strangers to come to Castle Dare on their round of the western islands, she had taken it for granted that their visit would necessarily be of the briefest; but the projects of which Keith Macleod now spoke seemed to suggest something like a summer passed at Dare. And he went on talking in this strain, nervously delighted with the pictures that each promised excursion called up. Miss White would be charmed with this, and delighted with that. Janet would find her so pleasant a companion; the mother would be inclined to pet her at first sight.

"She is already anxious to make your acquaintance, mother," said he to the proud old dame who sat there ominously silent. "And she could think of no other message to send you than this —it belonged to her mother."

He opened the little package—of old lace, or something of that kind—and handed it to his mother; and at the same time, his impetuosity carrying him on, he said that perhaps the mother would write now and propose the visit in the summer.

At this Lady Macleod's surprise overcame her reserve.

"You must be mad, Keith! To write in the middle of winter and send an invitation for the summer! And really the whole thing is so extraordinary—a present coming to me from an absolute stranger—and that stranger an actress who is quite unknown to any one I know——"

"Mother, mother," he cried, "don't say any more. She has promised to be my wife."

Lady Macleod stared at him—as if to see whether he had really gone mad; and rose, and pushed back her chair.

"Keith," she said, slowly, and with a cold dignity, "when you choose a wife, I hope I will be the first to welcome her: and I shall be proud to see you with a wife worthy of the name that you bear; but in the mean time I do not think that such a subject should be made the occasion of a foolish jest."

And with that she left the apartment; and Keith Macleod turned in a bewildered sort of fashion to his cousin. Janet Macleod had risen too; she was regarding him with anxious and troubled and tender eyes.

"Janet," said he, "it is no jest at all!"

"I know that," said she, in a low voice, and her face was somewhat pale. "I have known that. I knew it before you went away to England this last time."

And suddenly she went over to him, and bravely held out her hand; and there were quick tears in the beautiful grey eyes.

"Keith," said she, "there is no one will be more proud to see you happy than I; and I will do what I can for you now, if you will let me; for I see your whole heart is set on it; and how can I doubt that you have chosen a good wife?"

"Oh, Janet, if you could only see her and know her!"

She turned aside for a moment—only for a moment. When he next saw her face she was quite gay.

"You must know, Keith," said she, with a smile shining through the tears of the friendly eyes, "that women-folk are very jealous; and all of a sudden you come to auntie and me, and tell us that a stranger has taken away your heart from us and from Dare; and you must expect us to be angry and resentful just a little bit at first."

"I never could expect that from you, Janet," said he. "I knew that was always impossible from you."

"As for auntie, then," she said, warmly, "is it not natural that she should be surprised and perhaps offended——?"

"But she says she does not believe it—that I am making a joke of it——"

"That is only her way of protesting, you know," said the wise cousin. "And you must expect her to be angry and obdurate; because women have their prejudices, you know, Keith; and this young lady—well, it is a pity she is not known to some one auntie knows."

"She is known to Norman Ogilvie, and to dozens of Norman Ogilvie's friends, and Major Stewart has seen her," said he quickly; and then he drew back. "But that is nothing. I do not choose to have any one to vouch for her."

"I know that; I understand that, Keith," Janet Macleod said, gently. "It is enough for me that you have chosen her to be your wife; I know you would choose a good woman to be your wife; and it will be enough for your mother when she comes to reflect. But you must be patient."

"Patient I would be, if it concerned myself alone," said he, "but the reflection—the insult of the doubt——"

"Now, now, Keith," said she, "don't let the hot blood of the Macleods get the better of you. You must be patient, and considerate. If you will sit down now quietly, and tell me all about the young lady, I will be your ambassador, if you like: and I think I will be able to persuade auntie."

"I wonder if there ever was any woman as kind as you are, Janet?" said he, looking at her with a sort of wondering admiration.

"You must not say that any more now," she said, with a smile. "You must consider the young lady you have chosen as perfection in all things. And this is a small matter. If auntie is difficult to persuade, and should protest, and so forth, what she says will not hurt me, whereas it might hurt you very sorely. And now you will tell me all about the young lady; for I must have my hands full of arguments when I go to your mother."

And so this Court of Inquiry was formed; with one witness not altogether unprejudiced in giving his evidence; and with a judge ready to become the accomplice of the witness at any point. Somehow Macleod avoided speaking of Gertrude White's appearance. Janet was rather a plain woman—despite those tender Celtic eyes. He spoke rather of her filial duty and her sisterly affection; he minutely described her qualities as a house-

mistress; and he was enthusiastic about the heroism she had shown in determining to throw aside the glittering triumphs of her calling to live a simpler and wholesomer life. That passage in the career of Miss Gertrude White somewhat puzzled Janet Macleod. If it were the case that the ambitions and jealousies and simulated emotions of a life devoted to art had a demoralising and degrading effect on the character, why had not the young lady made the discovery a little earlier? What was the reason of her very sudden conversion? It was no doubt very noble on her part, if she really were convinced that this continual stirring up of sentiment without leading to practical issues had an unwholesome influence on her woman's nature, to voluntarily surrender all the intoxication of success, with its praises and flatteries. But why was the change in her opinions so sudden? According to Macleod's own account, Miss Gertrude White, when he first went up to London, was wholly given over to the ambition of succeeding in her profession. She was then the "white slave." She made no protest against the repeatedly-announced theories of her father to the effect that an artist ceased to live for himself or herself, and became merely a medium for the expression of the emotions of others. Perhaps the gentle cousin Janet would have had a clearer view of the whole case if she had known that Miss Gertrude White's awakening doubts as to the wholesomeness of simulated emotions on the human soul were strictly coincident in point of time with her conviction that at any moment she pleased she might call herself Lady Macleod.

With all the art he knew he described the beautiful small courtesies and tender ways of the little household at Rose Bank; and he made it appear that this young lady, brought up amid the sweet observances of the south, was making an enormous sacrifice in offering to brave, for his sake, the transference to the harder and harsher ways of the north.

"And, you know, Keith, she speaks a good deal for herself," Janet Macleod said, turning over the photographs, and looking at them perhaps a little wistfully. "It is a pretty face. It must make many friends for her. If she were here herself now, I don't think auntie would hold out for a moment."

"That is what I know," said he, eagerly. "That is why I

he was choosing a wife I think he might have looked nearer home, Janet."

"What a wild night it is!" said Janet Macleod quickly—and she went for a moment to the window. "The *Dunara* will be coming round the Mull of Cantire just about now. And where is the present, auntie, that the young lady sent you? You must write and thank her for that, at all events; and shall I write the letter for you in the morning?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

LADY MACLEOD remained obdurate; Janet went about the house with a sad look on her face; and Macleod, tired of the formal courtesy that governed the relations between his mother and himself, spent most of his time in snipe and duck shooting about the islands—braving the wild winds and wilder seas in a great open, lug-sailed boat, the *Umpire* having long ago been sent to her winter quarters. But the harsh, rough life had its compensations. Letters came from the south—treasures to be pored over night after night with an increasing wonder and admiration. Miss Gertrude White was a charming letter-writer; and now there was no restraint at all over her frank confessions and playful humours. Her letters were a prolonged chat—bright, rambling, merry, thoughtful, just as the mood occurred. She told him of her small adventures and the incidents of her every-day life, so that he could delight himself with vivid pictures of herself and her surroundings. And again and again she hinted rather than said that she was continually thinking of the Highlands, and of the great change in store for her.

"Yesterday morning," she wrote, "I was going down the Edgeware Road, and whom should I see but two small boys, dressed as young Highlanders, staring into the window of a toy-

am anxious she should come here. And if it were only possible to bring her now, there would be no more trouble; and I think we could get her to leave the stage—at least I would try. But how could we ask her to Dare in the winter-time? The sea and the rain would frighten her, and she would never consent to live here. And perhaps she needs time to quite make up her mind; she said she would educate herself all the winter through, and that, when I saw her again, she would be a thorough Highlandwoman. That shows you how willing she is to make any sacrifice, if she thinks it right."

"But if she is convinced," said Janet, doubtfully, "that she ought to leave the stage, why does she not do so at once? You say her father has enough money to support the family?"

"Oh yes, he has," said Macleod; and then he added, with some hesitation, "Well, Janet, I did not like to press that. She has already granted so much. But I might ask her."

At this moment Lady Macleod's maid came into the hall and said that her mistress wished to see Miss Macleod.

"Perhaps auntie thinks I am conspiring with you, Keith," she said, laughing, when the girl had gone. "Well, you will leave the whole thing in my hands; and I will do what I can. And be patient and reasonable, Keith, even if your mother won't hear of it for a day or two. We women are very prejudiced against each other, you know; and we have quick tempers, and we want a little coaxing and persuasion—that is all."

"You have always been a good friend to me, Janet," he said.

"And I hope it will all turn out for your happiness, Keith," she said, gently, as she left.

But as for Lady Macleod, when Janet reached her room, the haughty old dame was "neither to hold nor to bind." There was nothing she would not have done for this favourite son of hers but this one thing. Give her consent to such marriage! The ghosts of all the Macleods of Dare would call shame on her!

"Oh, auntie," said the patient Janet, "he has been a good son to you. And you must have known he would marry some day."

"Marry!" said the old lady, and she turned a quick eye on Janet herself. "I was anxious to see him married. And when

he was choosing a wife I think he might have looked nearer home, Janet."

"What a wild night it is!" said Janet Macleod quickly—and she went for a moment to the window. "The *Dunara* will be coming round the Mull of Cantire just about now. And where is the present, auntie, that the young lady sent you? You must write and thank her for that, at all events; and shall I write the letter for you in the morning?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

Lady Macleod remained obdurate; Janet went about the house with a sad look on her face; and Macleod, tired of the formal courtesy that governed the relations between his mother and himself, spent most of his time in snipe and duck shooting about the islands—braving the wild winds and wilder seas in a great open, lug-sailed boat, the *Umpire* having long ago been sent to her winter quarters. But the harsh, rough life had its compensations. Letters came from the south—treasures to be pored over night after night with an increasing wonder and admiration. Miss Gertrude White was a charming letter-writer; and now there was no restraint at all over her frank confessions and playful humours. Her letters were a prolonged chat—bright, rambling, merry, thoughtful, just as the mood occurred. She told him of her small adventures and the incidents of her every-day life, so that he could delight himself with vivid pictures of herself and her surroundings. And again and again she hinted rather than said that she was continually thinking of the Highlands, and of the great change in store for her.

"Yesterday morning," she wrote, "I was going down the Edgeware Road, and whom should I see but two small boys, dressed as young Highlanders, staring into the window of a toy-

shop. Stalwart young fellows they were, with ruddy complexions and brown legs, and their Glengarries coquettishly placed on the side of their head; and I could see at once that their plain kilt was no holiday-dress. How could I help speaking to them?—I thought perhaps they had come from Mull. And so I went up to them and asked if they would let me buy a toy for each of them. 'We dot money,' says the younger, with a bold stare at my impertinence. 'But you can't refuse to accept a present from a lady?' I said. 'Oh no, ma'am,' said the elder boy, and he politely raised his cap; and the accent of his speech—well, it made my heart jump. But I was very nearly disappointed when I got them into the shop; for I asked what their name was; and they answered 'Lavender.' 'Why, surely that is not a Highland name,' I said. 'No, ma'am,' said the elder lad; 'but my mamma is from the Highlands, and we are from the Highlands, and we are going back to spend the New Year at home.' 'And where is your home?' I asked; but I have forgotten the name of the place—I understood it was somewhere away in the north. And then I asked them if they had ever been to Mull. 'We have passed it in the *Clansman*,' said the elder boy. 'And do you know one Sir Keith Macleod there?' I asked. 'Oh no, ma'am,' said he, staring at me with his clear blue eyes as if I was a very stupid person, 'the Macleods are in Skye.' 'But, surely one of them may live in Mull?' I suggested. 'The Macleods are in Skye,' he maintained, 'and my papa was at Dunvegan last year.' Then came the business of choosing the toys; and the smaller child would have a boat, though his elder brother laughed at him, and said something about a former boat of his having been blown out into Loch Rogue—which seemed to me a strange name for even a Highland loch. But the elder lad, he must needs have a sword; and when I asked him what he wanted that for, he said, quite proudly, 'To kill the Frenchmen with.' 'To kill Frenchmen with!' I said—for this young fire-eater seemed to mean what he said. 'Yes, ma'am,' said he, 'for they shoot the sheep out on the Flannan Islands when no one sees them; but we will catch them some day.' I was afraid to ask him where the Flannan Islands were, for I could see he was already

regarding me as a very ignorant person; so I had their toys tied up for them, and packed them off home. 'And when you get home,' I said to them, 'you will give my compliments to your mamma, and say that you got the ship and the sword from a lady who has a great liking for the Highland people.' 'Yes, ma'am,' says he, touching his cap again with a proud politeness; and then they went their ways, and I saw them no more."

Then the Christmas-time came, with all its mystery, and friendly observances and associations; and she described to him how Carry and she were engaged in decorating certain schools in which they were interested; and how a young curate had paid her a great deal of attention until some one went and told him, as a cruel joke, that Miss White was a celebrated dancer at a music-hall.

Then, on Christmas morning, behold, the very first snow of the year! She got up early; she went out alone; the holiday world of London was not yet awake.

"I never in my life saw anything more beautiful," she wrote to him, "than Regent's Park this morning, in a pale fog, with just a sprinkling of snow on the green of the grass, and one great yellow mansion shining through the mist—the sunlight on it—like some magnificent distant palace. And I said to myself, if I were a poet or a painter I would take the common things, and show people the wonder and the beauty of them; for I believe the sense of wonder is a sort of light that shines in the soul of the artist; and the least bit of the 'denying spirit'—the utterance of the word *connu*—snuffs it out at once. But then, dear Keith, I caught myself asking what I had to do with all these dreams, and these theories that papa would like to have talked about. What had I to do with art? And then I grew miserable—perhaps the loneliness of the park, with only those robust, hurrying strangers crossing, blowing their fingers and pulling their cravats closer—had affected me; or perhaps it was that I suddenly found how helpless I am by myself. I want a sustaining hand, Keith; and that is now far away from me. I can do anything with myself of set purpose; but it doesn't last. If you remind me that one ought generously to overlook the faults of others, I generously overlook the faults of

from here; and we entered, and found ourselves in a large circular and domed hall, pretty nearly dark, and with a number of closed doors. It was all hushed and mysterious and dim; but there was a little more light when the man opened one of these doors and showed us into a chamber—or rather, one of a series of chambers—that seemed to me at first like a big child's toy-house, all painted and gilded with red and gold. It was bewilderingly full of objects that had no ostensible purpose—you could not tell whether any one of these rooms was dining-room, or drawing-room, or anything else; it was all a museum of wonderful cabinets filled with different sorts of ware, and trays of uncut precious stones, and Eastern jewellery, and what not; and then you discovered that in the panels of the cabinets were painted series of allegorical heads on a gold background; and then perhaps you stumbled on a painted glass window where no window should be. It was a splendid blaze of colour, no doubt; one began to dream of Byzantine emperors, and Moorish conquerors, and Constantinople gilt domes. But then—mark the dramatic effect!—away in the blaze of the further chamber appears a solemn, slim, bowed figure, dressed all in black—the black velvet coat seemed even blacker than black—and the mournful-eyed man approached, and he gazed upon us a grave welcome from the pleading, affected, tired eyes. He had a slight cough too, which I rather fancied was assumed for the occasion. Then we all sat down, and he talked to us in a low, sad, monotonous voice; and there was a smell of frankincense about—no doubt a band of worshippers had lately been visiting at the shrine; and, at papa's request, he showed me some of his trays of jewels, with a wearied air. And some famous Botticelli that papa had been speaking about: would he look at it now? Oh, dear Keith, the wickedness of the human imagination! As he went about in this limp and languid fashion, in the hushed room, with the old-fashioned scent in the air, I wished I was a street-boy. I wished I could get close behind him and give a sudden yell! Would he fly into bits? Would he be so startled into naturalness as to swear? And all the time that papa and he talked, I dared scarcely lift my eyes; for I could not but

think of the effect of that wild 'Hi!' And what if I had burst into a fit of laughter without any apparent cause?"

Apparently Miss White had not been much impressed by her visit to Mr. Lemuel's palace of art, and she made thereafter but slight mention of it, though she had been prevailed upon to let the artist borrow the expression of her face for his forthcoming picture. She had other things to think about now, when she wrote to Castle Dare.

For one day Lady Macleod went into her son's room and said to him, "Here is a letter, Keith, which I have written to Miss White. I wish you to read it."

He jumped to his feet, and hastily ran his eye over the letter. It was a trifle formal, it is true; but it was kind, and it expressed the hope that Miss White and her father would next summer visit Castle Dare. The young man threw his arms round his mother's neck and kissed her. "That is like a good mother," said he. "Do you know how happy she will be when she receives this message from you?"

Lady Macleod left him the letter to address. He read it over carefully; and though he saw that the handwriting was the handwriting of his mother, he knew that the spirit that had prompted these words was that of the gentle cousin Janet.

This concession had almost been forced from the old lady by the patience and mild persistence of Janet Macleod; but if anything could have assured her that she had acted properly in yielding, it was the answer which Miss Gertrude White sent in return. Miss White wrote that letter several times before sending it off, and it was a clever piece of composition. The timid expressions of gratitude; the hints of the writer's sympathy with the romance of the Highlands and the Highland character; the deference shown by youth to age; and here and there just the smallest glimpse of humour, to show that Miss White, though very humble and respectful and all that, was not a mere fool. Lady Macleod was pleased by this letter. She showed it to her son one night at dinner. "It is a pretty hand," she remarked critically.

Keith Macleod read it with a proud heart. "Can you not

gather what kind of woman she is from that letter alone?" he said eagerly. "I can almost hear her talk in it. Janet, will you read it too?"

Janet Macleod took the small sheet of perfumed paper and read it calmly, and handed it back to her aunt. "It is a nice letter," said she. "We must try to make Dare as bright as may be when she comes to see us, that she will not go back to England with a bad account of the Highland people."

That was all that was said at the time about the promised visit of Miss Gertrude White to Castle Dare. It was only as a visitor that Lady Macleod had consented to receive her. There was no word mentioned on either side of anything further than that. Mr. White and his daughter were to be in the Highlands next summer; they would be in the neighbourhood of Castle Dare; Lady Macleod would be glad to entertain them for a time, and make the acquaintance of two of her son's friends. At all events the proud old lady would be able to see what sort of woman this was whom Keith Macleod had chosen to be his wife.

And so the winter days and nights and weeks dragged slowly by; but always, from time to time, came those merry and tender and playful letters from the south, which he listened to rather than read. It was her very voice that was speaking to him, and in imagination he went about with her. He strolled with her over the crisp grass, whitened with hoar-frost, of the Regent's Park; he hurried home with her in the chill grey afternoons—the yellow gas-lamps being lit—to the little tea-table. When she visited a picture-gallery she sent him a full report of that even.

"Why is it," she asked, "that one is so delighted to look a long distance, even when the view is quite uninteresting? I wonder if that is why I greatly prefer landscape to figure subjects. The latter always seem to me to be painted from models just come from the Hampstead Road. There was scarcely a sea-piece in the exhibition that was not spoiled by figures, put in for the sake of picturesqueness, I suppose. Why, when you are by the sea you want to be alone, surely! Ah, if I could only have a look at those winter seas you speak of!"

He did not echo that wish at all. Even as he read he could

hear the thunderous booming of the breakers into the giant caves. Was it for a pale rose-leaf to brave that fell wind that tore the waves into spindrift and howled through the lonely chasms of Ben-an-Sloich?

To one of these precious documents, written in the small neat hand on pink-toned and perfumed paper, a postscript was added: "If you keep my letters," she wrote, and he laughed when he saw that *if*, "I wish you would go back to the one in which I told you of papa and me calling at Mr. Lemuel's house, and I wish, dear Keith, you would burn it. I am sure it was very cruel and unjust. One often makes the mistake of thinking people affected when there is no affectation of any sort about them. And if a man has injured his health and made an invalid of himself, through his intense and constant devotion to his work, surely that is not anything to be laughed at! Whatever Mr. Lemuel may be, he is at all events desperately in earnest. The passion that he has for his art, and his patience and concentration and self-sacrifice, seem to me to be nothing less than noble. And so, dear Keith, will you please to burn that impertinent letter?"

Macleod sought out the letter and carefully read it over. He came to the conclusion that he could see no just reason for complying with her demand. Frequently first impressions were best.

CHAPTER XXX.

A GRAVE.

In the bygone days this eager, active, stout-limbed young fellow had met the hardest winter with a glad heart. He rejoiced in its thousand various pursuits; he set his teeth against the driving hail; he laughed at the drenching spray that sprung high over the bows of his boat; and what harm ever came to him if he took the short-cut across the upper reaches of Lock Scridain—wading waist-deep through a mile of sea-water on a

bitter January day? And where was the loneliness of his life when always, wherever he went by sea or shore, he had these old friends around him—the red-beaked sea-pyots whirring along the rocks; and the startled curlews whistling their warning note across the sea; and the shy duck swimming far out on the smooth lochs; to say nothing of the black game that would scarcely move from their perch on the larch trees as he approached, and the deer that were more distinctly visible on the far heights of Ben-an-Sloich when a slight sprinkling of snow had fallen?

But now all this was changed. The awfulness of the dark winter time amid those northern seas overshadowed him. "It is like going into a grave," he had said to her. And with all his passionate longing to see her and have speech of her once more, how could he dare to ask her to approach these dismal solitudes? Sometimes he tried to picture her coming, and to read in imagination the look on her face. See now!—how she clings terrified to the side of the big open packet-boat that crosses the Frith of Lorn; and she dares not look abroad on the howling waste of waves. The mountains of Mull rise sad and cold and distant before her; there is no bright glint of sunshine to herald her approach. This small dog-cart now: it is a frail thing with which to plunge into the wild valleys, for surely a gust of wind might whirl it into the chasm of roaring waters below! Glen-More: who that has ever seen Glen-More on a lowering January day will ever forget it—its silence, its loneliness, its vast and lifeless gloom? Her face is pale now; she sits speechless and awe-stricken; for the mountain-walls that overhang this sombre ravine seem ready to fall on her, and there is an awful darkness spreading along their summits under the heavy swathes of cloud. And then those black lakes far down in the lone hollows, more death-like and horrible than any tourist-haunted Loch Coruisk: would she not turn to him, and with trembling hands implore him to take her back and away to the more familiar and bearable south? He began to see all these things with her eyes. He began to fear the awful things of the winter time and the seas. The glad heart had gone out of him.

Even the beautiful aspects of the Highland winter had some-

thing about them—an isolation, a terrible silence—that he grew almost to dread. What was this strange thing, for example? Early in the morning he looked from the windows of his room: and he could have imagined he was not at Dare at all. All the familiar objects of sea and shore had disappeared; this was a new world—a world of fantastic shapes, all moving and unknown—a world of vague masses of grey, though here and there a gleam of lemon-colour shining through the fog showed that the dawn was reflected on a glassy sea. Then he began to make out the things around him. That great range of purple mountains was only Ulva—Ulva transfigured and become Alpine! Then those wan gleams of yellow light on the sea?—he went to the other window, and behold! the eastern heavens parted, and there was a blaze of clear, metallic green; and the clouds bordering on that beautiful light were touched with a smoky and stormy saffron-hue that flashed and changed amid the seething and twisting shapes of the mist. He turned to the sea again—what phantom ship was this that appeared in mid-air, and apparently moving when there was no wind? He heard the sound of oars: the huge vessel turned out to be only the boat of the Gometra men going out to the lobster-traps. The yellow light on the glassy plain waxes stronger; new objects appear through the shifting fog; until at last a sudden opening shows him a wonderful thing far away—apparently at the very confines of the world—and awful in its solitary splendour. For that is the distant island of Staffa; and it has caught the colours of the dawn; and amid the cold greys of the sea it shines a pale transparent rose.

He would like to have sent her, if he had got any skill of the brush, some brief memorandum of that beautiful picture; but indeed, and in any case, that was not the sort of painting she seemed to care for just then. Mr. Lemuel, and his Palace of Art, and his mediæval saints, and what not, which had all for a time disappeared from Miss White's letters, began now to monopolize a good deal of space there; and there was no longer any impertinent playfulness in her references, but on the contrary a respect and admiration that occasionally almost touched enthusiasm. From hints more than statements Macleod gathered that Miss

White had been made much of by the people frequenting Mr. Lemuel's house. She had there met one or two gentlemen who had written very fine things about her in the papers; and certain highly distinguished people had been good enough to send her cards of invitation; and she had once or twice been persuaded to read some piece of dramatic poetry at Mr. Lemuel's afternoon parties; and she even suggested that Mr. Lemuel had almost as much as said that he would like to paint her portrait. Mr. Lemuel had also offered her—but she had refused to accept—a small but marvellous study by Pinturicchio, which most people considered the gem of his collection.

Macleod, reading and re-reading these letters many a time in the solitudes of western Mull, came to the opinion that there must be a good deal of amusement going on in London. And was it not natural that a young girl should like to be petted, and flattered, and made much of? Why should he complain when she wrote to say how she enjoyed this, and was charmed by that? Could he ask her to exchange that gay and pleasant life for this hibernation in Mull? Sometimes for days together the inhabitants of Castle Dare literally lived in the clouds. Dense bands of white mist lay all along the cliffs; and they lived in a semi-darkness, with the mournful dripping of the rain on the wet garden, and the mournful wash of the sea all around the shores. He was glad, then, that Gertrude White was not at Castle Dare.

But sometimes, when he could not forbear opening his heart to her, and pressing her for some more definite assurance as to the future, the ordinary playful banter in which she generally evaded his urgency gave place to a tone of coldness that astonished and alarmed him. Why should she so cruelly resent this piteous longing of his? Was she no longer, then, anxious to escape from the thraldom that had seemed so hateful to her?

"Hamish," said Macleod, abruptly, after reading one of these letters, "come now, we will go and overhaul the *Umpire*. You know she is to be made very smart this summer; for we have people coming all the way from London to Dare, and they must not think we do not know in Mull how to keep a yacht in good trim."

"Ay, sir," said Hamish; "and if we do not know that in Mull, where will they be likely to know that?"

"You will get the cushions in the saloon covered again; and we will have a new mirror for the ladies' cabin; and Miss Macleod, if you ask her, will put a piece of lace round the top of that, to make it look like a lady's room. And then, you know, Hamish, you can show the little boy Johnny Wickes how to polish the brass; and he will polish the brass in the ladies' cabin until it is as white as silver. Because, you know, Hamish, they have very fine yachts in the south. They are like hotels on the water. We must try to be as smart as we can."

"I do not know about the hotels," said Hamish, scornfully. "And perhaps it is a fine thing to hef a hotel; and Mr. M'Arthur they say he is a ferry rich man, and he has ferry fine pictures too; but I wass thinking that if I will be off the Barra Head on a bad night—between the Sgriobh bhan and the Barra Head on a bad night—it is not any hotel I will be wishing that I wass in, but a good boat. And the *Umpire* she is a good boat; and I not hef fear of going anywhere in the world with her—to London or to Inverary, ay, or the Queen's own castle on the Island—and she will go there safe, and she will come back safe; and if she is not a hotel, well, perhaps she will not be a hotel, but she is a fine good boat, and she has swinging-lamps whatever."

But even the presence of the swinging-lamps which Hamish regarded as the highest conceivable point of luxury, did little to lessen the dolorousness of the appearance of the poor old *Umpire*. As Macleod, seated in the stern of the gig, approached her, she looked like some dingy old hulk relegated to the duty of keeping stores. Her topmast and bowsprit removed; not a stitch of cord on her; only the black iron shrouds remaining of all her rigging; her skylights and companion covered with tarpaulins—it was a sorry spectacle. And then when they went below, even the swinging-lamps were blue-moulded and stiff. There was an odour of damp straw throughout. All the cushions and carpets had been removed; there was nothing but the bare wood of the floor and the couches and the table; with a match-box saturated with wet; an empty wine-bottle; a newspaper five months old; a

rusty corkscrew; a patch of dirty water—the leakage from the skylight overhead.

That was what Hamish saw.

What Macleod saw—as he stood there absently staring at the bare wood—was very different. It was a beautiful, comfortable saloon that he saw, all brightly furnished and gilded, and there was a dish of flowers—heather and rowan berries intermixed—on the soft red cover of the table. And who is this that is sitting there—clad in sailor-like blue and white—and laughing as she talks in her soft English speech? He is telling her that, if she means to be a sailor's bride, she must give up the wearing of gloves on board ship, although, to be sure, those gloved small hands look pretty enough as they rest on the table and play with a piece of bell-heather. How bright her smile is; she is in a mood for teasing people; the laughing face—but for the gentleness of the eyes—would be audacious. They say that the width between those long-lashed eyes is a common peculiarity of the artist's face; but she is no longer an artist; she is only the brave young yachtswoman who lives at Castle Dare. The shepherds know her, and answer her in the Gaelic when she speaks to them in passing; the sailors know her, and would adventure their lives to gratify her slightest wish; and the bearded fellows who live their solitary life far out at Dubh-Artach lighthouse, when she goes out to them with a new parcel of books and magazines, do not know how to show their gladness at the very sight of her bonnie face. There was once an actress of the same name; but this is quite a different woman. And to-morrow—do you know what she is going to do to-morrow?—to-morrow she is going away in this very yacht to a loch in the distant island of Lewis; and she is going to bring back with her some friends of hers who live there; and there will be high holiday at Castle Dare. An actress! Her cheeks are too sun-browned for the cheeks of an actress.

"Well, sir?" Hamish said, at length; and Macleod started.

"Very well, then," he said, impatiently, "why don't you go on deck, and find out where the leakage of the skylight is?"

Hamish was not used to being addressed in this fashion; and he walked away with a proud and hurt air. As he ascended the

companion-way, he was muttering to himself in his native tongue—

"Yes, I am going on deck to find out where the leakage is, but perhaps it would be easier to find out below where the leakage is. If there is something the matter with the keel, is it to the cross-trees you will go to look for it? But I do not know what has come to the young master of late."

When Keith Macleod was alone, he sate down on the wooden bench, and took out a letter, and tried to find there some assurance that this beautiful vision of his would some day be realized. He read it, and re-read it; but his anxious scrutiny only left him the more disheartened. He went up on deck. He talked to Hamish in a perfunctory manner, about the smartening up of the *Umpire.* He appeared to have lost interest in that already.

And then again he would seek relief in hard work, and try to forget altogether this hated time of enforced absence. One night word was brought by some one that the typhoid fever had broken out in the ill-drained cottages of Iona; and he said at once that next morning he would go round to Bunessan and ask the sanitary inspector there to be so kind as to inquire into this matter, and see whether something could not be done to improve these hovels.

"I am sure the Duke does not know of it, Keith," his cousin Janet said, "or he would have a great alteration made."

"It is easy to make alterations," said he, "but it is not easy to make the poor people take advantage of them. They have such good health from the sea air that they will not pay attention to ordinary cleanliness. But now that two or three of the young girls and children are ill, perhaps it is a good time to have something done."

Next morning, when he rose before it was quite daybreak, there was every promise of a fine day. The full moon was setting behind the western seas, touching the clouds there with a dusky yellow; in the east there was a wilder glare of steely blue, high up over the intense blackness of the peaks of Ben-an-Sloich; and the morning was still, for he heard, suddenly piercing the silence, the whistle of a curlew, and that became more and more remote as the unseen bird winged its flight far

over the sea. He lit the candles, and made the necessary preparations for his journey; for he had some message to leave at Kinloch at the head of Loch Scridain, and he was going to ride round that way. By and by the morning light had increased so much that he blew out the candles.

No sooner had he done this than his eye caught sight of something outside that startled him. It seemed as though great clouds of golden-white, all ablaze in sunshine, rested on the dark bosom of the deep. Instantly he went to the window; and then he saw that these clouds were not clouds at all, but the islands around glittering in the "white wonder of the snow," and catching here and there the shafts of the early sunlight that now streamed through the valleys of Mull. The sudden marvel of it! There was Ulva, shining beautiful as in a sparkling bridal veil; and Gometra a paler blue-white in shadow; and Colonsay and Erisgeir also a cold white; and Staffa a pale grey; and then the sea that the gleaming islands rested on had become a mirror of pale green and rose-purple hues reflected from the morning sky. It was all dream-like, so still, and beautiful, and silent. But he now saw that the fine morning would not last. Behind the house, clouds of a suffused yellow began to blot out the peaks of Ben-an-Sloich. The colours of the plain of the sea were troubled with gusts of wind until they disappeared altogether. The sky in the north grew an ominous black; until the further shores of Loch Tua were dazzling white against that bank of angry cloud. But to Bunessan he would go.

Janet Macleod was not much afraid of the weather at any time, but she said to him at breakfast, in a laughing way—

"And if you are lost in a snow-drift in Glen Finichen, Keith, what are we to do for you?"

"What are you to do for me?—why, Donald will make a fine Lament; and what more than that?"

"Cannot you send one of the Camerons with a message, Keith?" his mother said.

"Well, mother," said he, "I think I will go on to Fhion-fort and cross over to Iona myself, for the cottages are very bad there, I know; and if I must write to the Duke, it is better that I should have made the inquiries myself."

And indeed when Macleod set out on his stout young pony Jack, paying but little heed to the cold driftings of sleet that the sharp east wind was sending across, it seemed as though he were destined to perform several charitable deeds all on the one errand. For, firstly, about a mile from the house, he met Duncan the policeman, who was making his weekly round in the interests of morality and order; and who had to have his book signed by the heritor of Castle Dare as sure witness that his peregrinations had extended so far. And Duncan was not at all sorry to be saved that trudge of a mile in the face of the bitter blasts of sleet; and he was greatly obliged to Sir Keith Macleod for stopping his pony, and getting out his pencil with his benumbed fingers, and putting his initials to the page. And then, again, when he had got into Glen Finichen, he was talking to the pony and saying—

"Well, Jack, I don't wonder you want to stop, for the way this sleet gets down one's throat is rather choking. Or are you afraid of the sheep loosening the rocks away up there, and sending two or three hundred-weight on our head?"

Then he happened to look up the steep sides of the great ravine, and there, quite brown against the snow, he saw a sheep that had toppled over some rock, and was now lying with her legs in the air. He jumped off his pony, and left Jack standing in the middle of the road. It was a stiff climb up that steep precipice, with the loose stones slippery with the sleet and snow; but at last he got a good grip of the sheep by the back of her neck, and hauled her out of the hole into which she had fallen, and put her, somewhat dazed but apparently unhurt, on her legs again. Then he half slid and half ran down the slope again; and got into the saddle.

But what was this now? The sky in the east had grown quite black; and suddenly the blackness began to fall as if torn down by invisible hands. It came nearer and nearer, until it resembled the dishevelled hair of a woman. And then there was a rattle and roar of wind and snow and hail combined; so that the pony was nearly thrown from its feet, and Macleod was so blinded that at first he knew not what to do. Then he saw some rocks ahead; and he urged the bewildered and staggering

beast forward through the darkness of the storm. Night seemed to have returned. There was a flash of lightning overhead; and a crackle of thunder rolled down the valley, heard louder than all the howling of the hurricane across the mountain sides. And then, when they had reached this place of shelter, Macleod dismounted, and crept as close as he could into the lee of the rocks.

He was startled by a voice—it was only that of old John Macintyre the postman, who was glad enough to get into this place of refuge too.

"It's a bad day for you to be out this day, Sir Keith," said he, in the Gaelic, "and you have no cause to be out; and why will you not go back to Castle Dare?"

"Have you any letter for me, John?" said he eagerly.

Oh, yes, there was a letter; and the old man was astonished to see how quickly Sir Keith Macleod took that letter, and how anxiously he read it, as though the awfulness of the storm had no concern for him at all. And what was it all about—this wet sheet that he had to hold tight between his hands, or the gusts that swept round the rock would have whirled it up and away over the giant ramparts of Bourg? It was a very pretty letter; and rather merry; for it was all about a fancy-dress ball which was to take place at Mr. Lemuel's house; and all the people were to wear a Spanish costume of the time of Philip IV.; and there were to be very grand doings indeed. And as Keith Macleod had nothing to do in the dull winter-time but devote himself to books, would he be so kind as to read up about that period, and advise her as to which historical character she ought to assume?

Macleod burst out laughing—in a strange sort of way; and put the wet letter in his pocket; and led Jack out into the road again.

"Sir Keith, Sir Keith," cried the old man, "you will not go on now?"—and as he spoke another blast of snow tore across the glen, and there was a rumble of thunder among the hills.

"Why, John," Macleod called back again, from the grey gloom of the whirling snow and sleet, "would you have me go home and read books too? Do you know what a fancy-dress

A SNOW STORM.

ball is, John? And do you know what they think of us in the south, John—that we have nothing to do here in the winter time—nothing to do here but read books?"

The old man heard him laughing to himself, in that odd way, as he rode off and disappeared into the driving snow; and his heart was heavy within him, and his mind filled with strange forebodings. It was a dark and an awful glen—this great ravine that led down to the solitary shores of Loch Scridain.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OVER THE SEAS.

BUT no harm at all came of that reckless ride through the storm; and in a day or two's time Macleod had almost argued himself into the belief that it was but natural for a young girl to be fascinated by these new friends. And how could he protest against a fancy-dress ball when he himself had gone to one on his brief visit to London? It was a proof of her confidence in him that she wished to take his advice about her costume.

Then he turned to other matters; for, as the slow weeks went by, one eagerly disposed to look for the signs of the coming spring might occasionally detect a new freshness in the morning air, or even find a little bit of the witlow-grass in flower among the moss of an old wall. And Major Stewart had come over to Dare once or twice; and had privately given Lady Macleod and her niece such enthusiastic accounts of Miss Gertrude White that the reference to her forthcoming visit ceased to be formal and became friendly and matter-of-course. It was rarely, however, that Keith Macleod mentioned her name. He did not seem to wish for any confidant. Perhaps her letters were enough.

But on one occasion Janet Macleod said to him, with a shy smile—

"I think you must be a very patient lover, Keith, to spend all

the winter here. Another young man would have wished to go to London."

"And I would go to London, too!" he said suddenly, and then he stopped. He was somewhat embarrassed. "Well, I will tell you, Janet. I do not wish to see her any more as an actress; and she says it is better that I do not go to London; and—and, you know, she will soon cease to be an actress."

"But why not now," said Janet Macleod, with some wonder, "if she has such a great dislike for it?"

"That I do not know," said he, somewhat gloomily.

But he wrote to Gertrude White, and pressed the point once more, with great respect, it is true, but still with an earnestness of pleading that showed how near the matter lay to his heart. It was a letter that would have touched most women; and even Miss Gertrude White was pleased to see how anxiously interested he was in her.

"But you know, my dear Keith," she wrote back, "when people are going to take a great plunge into the sea, they are warned to wet their head first. And don't you think I should accustom myself to the change you have in store for me by degrees? In any case, my leaving the stage at the present moment could make no difference to us—you in the Highlands, I in London. And do you know, sir, that your request is particularly ill-timed; for as it happens I am about to enter into a new dramatic project of which I should probably never have heard but for you. Does that astonish you? Well, here is the story. It appears that you told the Duchess of Wexford that I would give her a performance for the new training-ship she is getting up; and, being challenged, could I break a promise made by you? And only fancy what these clever people have arranged—to flatter their own vanity in the name of charity. They have taken St. George's Hall; and the distinguished amateurs have chosen the play; and the play—don't laugh, dear Keith—is *Romeo and Juliet!* And I am to play *Juliet* to the *Romeo* of a certain Captain Brierley, who is a very good-looking man, but who is so solemn and stiff a Romeo that I know I shall burst out laughing on the dreaded night. He is as nervous now at a morning rehearsal as if it were his *débût* at Drury Lane; and he

never even takes my hand without an air of apology, as if he were saying, 'Really, Miss White, you must pardon me; I am compelled by my part to take your hand; otherwise I would die rather than be guilty of such a liberty.' And when he addresses me in the balcony-scene, he *will not* look at me; he makes his protestations of love to the flies; and when I make my fine speeches to him, he blushes if his eyes should by chance meet mine, just as if he had been guilty of some awful indiscretion. I know, dear Keith, you don't like to see me act; but you might come up for this occasion only. Friar Lawrence is the funniest thing I have seen for ages. The nurse, however—Lady Bletherin—is not at all bad. I hear there is to be a grand supper afterwards somewhere; and I have no doubt I shall be presented to a number of ladies who will speak for the first time to an actress and be possessed with a wild fear; only, if they have daughters, I suppose they will keep the fluttering-hearted young things out of the way, lest I should suddenly break out into blue flame, and then disappear through the floor. I am quite convinced that Captain Brierley considers me a bold person because I look at him when I have to say—

> "O gentle Romeo,
> If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully!"

Macleod crushed this letter together, and thrust it into his pocket. He strode out of the room, and called for Hamish.

"Send Donald down to the quay," said he abruptly, "and tell them to get the boat ready. And he will take down my gun too."

Old Hamish, noticing the expression of his master's eyes, went off quickly enough, and soon got hold of Donald, the piper-lad.

"Donald," said he, in the Gaelic, "you will run down to the quay as fast as your legs can carry you, and you will tell them to get the boat ready, and not to lose any time in getting the boat ready, and to have the seats dry, and let there be no talking when Sir Keith gets on board. And here is the gun, too; and the bag; and you will tell them to have no talking among themselves this day."

When Macleod got down to the small stone pier, the two men

were in the boat. Johnny Wickes was standing at the door of the store-house.

"Would you like to go for a sail, Johnny?" Macleod said, curtly—but there was no longer that dangerous light in his eyes.

"Oh yes, sir," said the boy eagerly; for he had long ago lost his dread of the sea.

"Get in, then, and get up to the bow."

So Johnny Wickes went cautiously down the few slippery stone steps, half tumbled into the bottom of the great open boat, and then scrambled up to the bow.

"Where will you be going, sir?" said one of the men, when Macleod had jumped into the stern, and taken the tiller.

"Anywhere—right out!" he answered carelessly.

But it was all very well to say "right out!" when there was a stiff breeze blowing right in. Scarcely had the boat put her nose beyond the pier,—and while as yet there was but little way on her—when a big sea caught her, springing high over her bows and coming rattling down on her with a noise as of pistol-shots. The chief victim of this deluge was the luckless Johnny Wickes, who tumbled down into the bottom of the boat, vehemently blowing the salt water out of his mouth, and rubbing his knuckles into his eyes. Macleod burst out laughing.

"What's the good of you as a look-out?" he cried. "Didn't you see the water coming?"

"Yes, sir," said Johnny, ruefully laughing too. But he would not be beaten. He scrambled up again to his post, and clung there, despite the fierce wind and the clouds of spray.

"Keep her close up, sir," said the man who had the sheet of the huge lug-sail in both his hands, as he cast a glance out at the darkening sea.

But this great boat, rude and rough and dirty as she appeared, was a splendid specimen of her class; and they know how to build such boats up about that part of the world. No matter with how staggering a plunge she went down into the yawning green gulf—the white foam hissing away from her sides—before the next wave, high, awful, threatening, had come down on her with a crash as of mountains falling, she had glided buoyantly upwards, and the heavy blow only made her bows spring the

higher, as though she would shake herself free, like a bird, from the wet. But it was a wild day to be out. So heavy and black was the sky in the west that the surface of the sea, out to the horizon, seemed to be a moving mass of white foam with only streaks of green and purple in it. The various islands changed every minute as the wild clouds whirled past. Already the great cliffs about Dare had grown distant and faint as seen through the spray; and here were the rocks of Colonsay, black as jet as they reappeared through the successive deluges of white foam; and far over there, a still gloomier mass against the gloomy sky told where the huge Atlantic breakers were rolling in their awful thunder into the Staffa caves.

"I would keep off a bit, sir," said the sailor next Macleod. He did not like the look of the heavy breakers that were crashing on to the Colonsay rocks.

Macleod, with his teeth set hard against the wind, was not thinking of the Colonsay rocks more than was necessary to give them a respectful berth.

"Were you ever in a theatre, Duncan?" he said—or rather bawled—to the brown-visaged and black-haired young fellow, who had now got the sheet of the lug-sail under his foot as well as in the firm grip of his hands.

"Oh yes, Sir Keith," said he, as he shook the salt water away from his short beard. "It wass at Greenock I will be at the theatre, and more than three times or four times."

"How would you like to have a parcel of actors and actresses with us now?" he said, with a laugh.

"'Deed I would not like it at all," said Duncan, seriously; and he twisted the sheet of the sail twice round his right wrist, so that his relieved left hand could covertly convey a bit of wet tobacco to his mouth. "The women they would chump apout, and then you do not know what will happen at all."

And so they went plunging and staggering and bounding onwards, with the roar of the water all around them, and the foam at her bows, as it sprang high into the air, showing quite white against the black sky ahead. The younger lad Duncan was clearly of opinion that his master was running too near the shores of Colonsay; but he would say no more, for he knew that

Macleod had a better knowledge of the currents and rocks of this wild coast than any man on the mainland of Mull. John Cameron, forward, kept his head down to the gunwale, his eyes looking far over that howling waste of sea; Duncan, his younger brother, had his gaze fixed mostly on the brown breadth of the sail, hammered at by the gusts of wind; while as for the boy at the bow, that enterprising youth had got a rope's end, and was endeavouring to strike at the crest of each huge wave as it came ploughing along in its resistless strength.

But at one moment the boat gave a heavier lurch than usual, and the succeeding wave struck her badly. In the great rush of water that then ran by her side, Macleod's startled eye seemed to catch a glimpse of something red—something blazing and burning red in the waste of green, and almost the same glance showed him that there was no boy at the bow! Instantly, with just one cry to arrest the attention of the men, he had slipped over the side of the boat, just as an otter slips off a rock. The two men were bewildered but for a second. One sprang to the halyards and down came the great lug-sail; the other got out one of the long oars, and the mighty blade of it fell into the bulk of the next wave as if he would with one sweep tear her head round. Like two madmen the men pulled; and the wind was with them, and the tide also; but, nevertheless, when they caught sight—just for a moment—of some object behind them, that was a terrible way away. Yet there was no time, they thought, or seemed to think, to hoist the sail again; and the small dingay attached to the boat would have been swamped in a second; and so there was nothing for it but the deadly struggle with those immense blades against the heavy resisting mass of the boat. John Cameron looked round again; then, with an oath, he pulled his oar across the boat.

"Up with the sail, lad!" he shouted; and again he sprang to the halyards.

The seconds, few as they were, that were necessary to this operation, seemed ages; but no sooner had the wind got a purchase on the breadth of the sail than the boat flew through the water, for she was now running free.

"He has got him! I can see the two!" shouted the elder Cameron.

And as for the younger? At this mad speed the boat would be close to Macleod in another second or two; but in that brief space of time the younger Cameron had flung his clothes off, and stood there stark naked in the cutting March wind.

"This is foolishness!" his brother cried in the Gaelic. "You will have to take an oar!"

"I will not take an oar!" the other cried, with both hands ready to let go the halyards. "And if it is foolishness, this is the foolishness of it; I will not let you or any man say that Sir Keith Macleod was in the water and Duncan Cameron went home with a dry skin!"

And Duncan Cameron was as good as his word; for as the boat went plunging forward to the neighbourhood in which they occasionally saw the head of Macleod appear on the side of a wave and then disappear again as soon as the wave broke—and as soon as the lug-sail had been rattled down—he sprang clear from the side of the boat. For a second or two, John Cameron, left by himself in the boat, could not see any one of the three; but at last he saw the black head of his brother, and then some few yards beyond, just as a wave happened to roll by, he saw his master and the boy. The boat had almost enough way on her to carry her the length; he had but to pull at the huge oar to bring her head round a bit. And he pulled, madly and blindly, until he was startled by a cry close by. He sprang to the side of the boat. There was his brother drifting by, holding the boy with one arm. John Cameron rushed to the stern to fling a rope; but Duncan Cameron had been drifting by with a purpose; for as soon as he got clear of the bigger boat, he struck for the dingay, and got hold of that, and was safe. And here was the master, too, clinging to the side of the dingay, so as to recover his breath; but not attempting to board the cockle-shell in these plunging waters. There were tears running down John Cameron's rugged face as he drew the three up and over the side of the big boat.

"And if you wass drowned, Sir Keith, it wass not me would

have carried the story to Castle Dare. I would just as soon have been drowned too."

"Have you any whisky, John?" Macleod said, pushing his hair out of his eyes, and trying to get his moustache out of his mouth.

In ordinary circumstances John Cameron would have told a lie; but on this occasion he hurriedly bade the still undressed Duncan to take the tiller, and he went forward to a locker at the bows which was usually kept for bait, and from thence he got a black bottle which was half full.

"Now, Johnny Wickes," Macleod said to the boy, who was quite blinded and bewildered, but otherwise appa ertly not much the worse, "swallow a mouthful of this, you young rascal! and if I catch you imitating a dolphin again, it is a rope's end you'll have, and not good Highland whisky."

Johnny Wickes did not understand; but he swallowed the whisky, and then he began to look about him a bit.

"Will I put my clothes round him, Sir Keith?" Duncan Cameron said.

"And go home that way to Dare?" Macleod said with a loud laugh. "Get on your clothes, Duncan, lad; and get up the sail again; and we will see if there is a dram left for us in the bottle. John Cameron, confound you, where are you putting her head to?"

John Cameron, who had again taken the tiller, seemed as one demented. He was talking to himself rapidly in Gaelic; and his brows were frowning; and he did not seem to notice that he was putting the head of the boat—which had now some little way on her, by reason of the wind and tide, though she had no sail up — a good deal too near the southernmost point of Colonsay.

Roused from this angry reverie, he shifted her course a bit; and then, when his brother had got his clothes on, he helped to hoist the sail, and again they flew onwards and shorewards, along with the waves that seemed to be racing them; but all the same he kept muttering and growling to himself in the Gaelic. Meanwhile Macleod had got a huge oil-skin over-coat, and wrapped Johnny Wickes in it, and put him in the bottom of the boat.

"You will soon be warm enough in that, Master Wickes," said he; "the chances are you will come out boiled red, like a lobster. And I would strongly advise you, if we can slip into the house and get dry clothes on, not to say a word of your escapade to Hamish."

"Ay, Sir Keith," said John Cameron, eagerly, in his native tongue, "that is what I will be saying to myself. If the story is told; and Hamish will hear that you will nearly drown yourself; what is it he will not do to that boy? It is for killing him he will be."

"Not as bad as that, John," Macleod said, good-naturedly. "Come, there is a glass for each of us; and you may give me the tiller now."

"I will take no whisky, Sir Keith, with thanks to you," said John Cameron; "I was not in the water."

"There is plenty for all, man!"

"I was not in the water."

"I tell you there is plenty for all of us!"

'There is the more for you, Sir Keith," said he, stubbornly.

And then, as great good luck would have it, it was found, when they got ashore, that Hamish had gone away as far as Salen on business of some sort or other; and the story told by the two Camerons was that Johnny Wickes, whose clothes were sent into the kitchen to be dried, and who was himself put to bed, had fallen into the water down by the quay; and nothing at all was said about Keith Macleod having had to leap into the sea off the coast of Colonsay. Macleod got into Castle Dare by a back way; and changed his clothes in his own room. Then he went away up-stairs to the small chamber in which Johnny Wickes lay in bed.

"You have had the soup, then? You look pretty comfortable."

"Yes, sir," said the boy, whose face was now flushed red with the reaction after the cold. "I beg your pardon, sir."

"For tumbling into the water?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, look here, Master Wickes. You chose a good time. If I had had trousers on, and waterproof leggings over them, do you know where you would be at the present moment? You

would be having an interesting conversation with a number of lobsters at the bottom of the sea, off the Colonsay shores. And so you thought because I had my kilt on, that I could fish you out of the water?"

"No, sir," said Johnny Wickes. "I beg your pardon, sir."

"Well, you will remember that it was owing to the Highland kilt that you were picked out of the water; and that it was Highland whisky put life into your blood again; you will remember that well; and if any strange lady should come here from England and ask you how you like the Highlands, you will not forget?"

"No, sir."

"And you can have Oscar up here in the room with you, if you like, until they let you out of bed again; or you can have Donald to play the pipes to you until dinner-time."

Master Wickes chose the less heroic remedy; but, indeed, the companionship of Oscar was not needed; for Janet Macleod—who might just as well have tried to keep her heart from beating as to keep herself away from any one who was ill or supposed to be ill—herself came up to this little room, and was very attentive to Master Wickes, not because he was suffering very much from the effects of his ducking, but because he was a child, and alone, and a stranger. And to her Johnny Wickes told the whole story; despite the warning he had received that, if Hamish came to learn of the peril in which Macleod had been placed by the carelessness of the English lad, the latter would have a bad time of it at Castle Dare. Then Janet hastened away again; and finding her cousin's bedroom empty, entered; and there discovered that he had, with customary recklessness, hung up his wet clothes in his wardrobe. She had them at once conveyed away to the lower regions; and she went with earnest remonstrances to her cousin and would have him drink some hot whisky-and-water; and when Hamish arrived, went straight to him too, and told him the story in such a way that he said—

"Ay, ay, it wass the poor little lad! And he will mek a good sailor yet. And it wass not much dancher for him when Sir Keith wass in the boat; for there is no one in the whole of

the islands will sweem in the water as he can sweem; and it is like a fish in the water that he is."

That was about the only incident of note—and little was made of it—that disturbed the monotony of life at Castle Dare at this time. But by and by, as the days passed, and as eager eyes looked abroad, signs showed that the beautiful summer-time was drawing near. The deep blue came into the skies and the seas again; the yellow mornings broke earlier; far into the evening they could still make out the Dutchman's Cap, and Lunga, and the low-lying Coll and Tiree amid the glow at the horizon after the blood-red sunset had gone down. The white stars of the saxifrage appeared in the woods; the white daisies were in the grass; as you walked along the lower slopes of Ben-an-Sloich the grouse that rose were in pairs. What a fresh green this was that shimmered over the young larches! He sent her a basket of the first trout he caught in the loch.

The wonderful glad time came nearer and nearer. And every clear and beautiful day that shone over the white sands of Iona and the green shores of Ulva, with the blue seas all breaking joyfully along the rocks, was but a day thrown away that should have been reserved for her. And whether she came by the *Dunara* from Greenock, or by the *Pioneer* from Oban, would they hang the vessel in white roses in her honour; and have velvet carpetings on the gangways for the dainty small feet to tread on; and would the bountiful heavens grant but one shining blue day for her first glimpse of the far and lonely Castle Dare? Janet the kind-hearted was busy from morning till night—she herself would place the scant flowers that could be got in the guests' rooms. The steward of the *Pioneer* had undertaken to bring any nnmber of things from Oban; Donald the piper-lad had a brand new suit of tartan, and was determined that, short of the very cracking of his lungs, the English lady would have a good Salute played for her that day. The *Umpire*, all smartened up now, had been put in a safe anchorage in Loch-na-Keal; the men wore their new jerseys; the long gig, its golden-yellow pine shining with varnish, was brought along to Dare, so that it might, if the weather were favourable, go out to bring the Fair Stranger to her Highland home. And then the heart of her

lover cried—"*O winds and seas—if only for one day — be gentle now!—so that her first thoughts of us shall be all of peace and loveliness, and of a glad welcome, and the delight of clear summer days!*"

CHAPTER XXXII.

HAMISH.

AND now—look! The sky is as blue as the heart of a sapphire, and the sea would be as blue too, only for the glad white of the rippling waves. And the wind is as soft as the winnowing of a sea-gull's wing; and green, green are the laughing shores of Ulva! The bride is coming. All around the coast the people are on the alert; Donald in his new finery; Hamish half frantic with excitement; the crew of the *Umpire* down at the quay; and the scarlet flag fluttering from the top of the white pole. And behold!—as the cry goes along that the steamer is in sight, what is this strange thing? She comes clear out from the Sound of Iona; but who has ever seen before that long line running from her stem to her masts and down again to her stern?

"Oh, Keith," Janet Macleod cried, with sudden tears starting to her eyes, "do you know what Captain Macallum has done for you? The steamer has got all her flags out!"

Macleod flushed red.

"Well, Janet," said he, "I wrote to Captain Macallum, and I asked him to be so good as to pay them some little attention; but who was to know that he would do that?"

"And a very proper thing, too," said Major Stewart, who was standing hard by. "A very pretty compliment to strangers; and you know you have not many visitors coming to Castle Dare."

The Major spoke in a matter-of-fact way. Why should not the steamer show her bunting in honour of Macleod's guests?

But all the same the gallant soldier, as he stood and watched the steamer coming along, became a little bit excited too; and he whistled to himself, and tapped his toe on the ground. It was a fine air he was whistling. It was all about breast-knots!

"Into the boat with you now, lads!" Macleod called out; and first of all to go down to the steps was Donald; and the silver and cairngorms on his pipes were burnished so that they shone like diamonds in the sunlight; and he wore his cap so far on one side that nobody could understand how it did not fall off. Macleod was alone in the stern. Away the shapely boat went through the blue waves.

"Put your strength into it now," said he, in the Gaelic, "and show them how the Mull lads can row!"

And then again—

"Steady now! Well rowed, boys!"

And here are all the people crowding to one side of the steamer to see the strangers off; and the captain is on the bridge; and Sandy is at the open gangway; and at the top of the iron steps—there is only one whom Macleod sees—and she is all in white and blue—and he has caught her eyes—at last, at last!

He seized the rope, and sprang up the iron ladder.

"Welcome to you, sweetheart!" said he, in a low voice, and his trembling hand grasped hers.

"How do you, Keith?" said she. "Must we go down these steps?"

He had no time to wonder over the coldness—the petulance almost—of her manner; for he had to get both father and daughter safely conducted into the stern of the boat; and their luggage had to be got in; and he had to say a word or two to the steward; and finally he had to hand down some loaves of bread to the man next him, who placed them in the bottom of the boat.

"The commissariat arrangements are primitive," said Mr. White in an undertone to his daughter; though she made no answer to his words or his smile. But indeed, even if Macleod had overheard, he would have taken no shame to himself that he had secured a supply of white bread for his guests. Those who had gone yachting with Macleod—Major Stewart, for

example, or Norman Ogilvie—had soon learned not to despise their host's highly practical acquaintance with tinned meats, pickles, condensed milk, and such-like things. Who was it had proposed to erect a monument to him for his discovery of the effect of introducing a leaf of lettuce steeped in vinegar between the folds of a sandwich?

Then he jumped down into the boat again; and the great steamer steamed away; and the men struck their oars into the water.

"We will soon take you ashore now," said he, with a glad light on his face; but so excited was he that he could scarcely get the tiller-ropes right; and certainly he knew not what he was saying. And as for her—why was she so silent after the long separation? Had she no word at all for the lover who had so hungered for her coming?

And then Donald, perched high at the bow, broke away into his wild welcome of her; and there was a sound now louder than the calling of the seabirds and the rushing of the seas. And if the English lady knew that this proud and shrill strain had been composed in honour of her, would it not bring some colour of pleasure to the pale face? So thought Donald at least; and he had his eyes fixed on her as he played as he had never played before that day. And if she did not know the cunning modulations and the clever fingering, Macleod knew them; and the men knew them; and after they got ashore they would say to him—

"Donald, that was a good pibroch you played for the English lady."

But what was the English lady's thanks? Donald had not played over sixty seconds when she turned to Macleod and said—

"Keith, I wish you would stop him. I have a headache."

And so Macleod called out at once, in the lad's native tongue. But Donald could not believe this thing—though he had seen the strange lady turn to Sir Keith. And he would have continued had not one of the men turned to him and said—

"Donald, do you not hear? Put down the pipes."

For an instant the lad looked dumbfounded; then he slowly

took down the pipes from his shoulder, and put them beside him; and then he turned his face to the bow so that no one should see the tears of wounded pride that had sprung to his eyes. And Donald said no word to any one till they got ashore; and he went away by himself to Castle Dare, with his head bent down, and his pipes under his arm; and when he was met at the door by Hamish, who angrily demanded why he was not down at the quay with his pipes, he only said—

"There is no need of me or my pipes any more at Dare; and it is somewhere else that I will now go with my pipes."

But meanwhile Macleod was greatly concerned to find his sweetheart so cold and distant; and it was all in vain that he pointed out to her the beauties of this summer day—that he showed her the various islands he had often talked about, and called her attention to the skarts sitting on the Erisgeir rocks, and asked her—seeing that she sometimes painted a little in water-colour—whether she noticed the peculiar, clear, intense, and luminous blue of the shadows in the great cliffs which they were approaching. Surely no day could have been more auspicious for her coming to Dare?

"The sea did not make you ill?" he said.

"Oh no," she answered; and that was true enough, though it had produced in her agonizing fears of becoming ill which had somewhat ruffled her temper. And besides she had a headache. And then she had a nervous fear of small boats.

"It is a very small boat to be out in the open sea," she remarked, looking at the long and shapely gig that was cleaving the summer waves.

"Not on a day like this surely," said he, laughing. "But we will make a good sailor of you before you leave Dare, and you will think yourself safer in a boat like this than in a big steamer. Do you know that the steamer you came in, big as it is, draws only five feet of water?"

If he had told her that the steamer drew five tons of coal she could just as well have understood him. Indeed she was not paying much attention to him. She had an eye for the biggest of the waves that were running by the side of the long boat.

But she plucked up her spirits somewhat on getting ashore;

and she made the prettiest of little curtsies to Lady Macleod; and she shook hands with Major Stewart, and gave him a charming smile; and she shook hands with Janet too, whom she regarded with a deep scrutiny. So this was the cousin that Keith Macleod was continually praising?

"Miss White has a headache, mother," Macleod said, eager to account beforehand for any possible constraint in her manner. "Shall we send for the pony?"

"Oh no," Miss White said, looking up to the bare walls of Dare. "I shall be very glad to have a short walk now. Unless you, papa, would like to ride?"

"Certainly not—certainly not," said Mr. White, who had been making a series of formal remarks to Lady Macleod about his impressions of the scenery of Scotland.

"We will get you a cup of tea," said Janet Macleod, gently, to the new-comer, "and you will lie down for a little time, and I hope the sound of the waterfall will not disturb you. It is a long way you have come; and you will be very tired, I am sure."

"Yes, it is a pretty long way," she said; but she wished this over-friendly woman would not treat her as if she were a spoiled child. And no doubt they thought, because she was English, she could not walk up to the further end of that fir-wood.

So they all set out for Castle Dare; and Macleod was now walking—as many a time he had dreamed of his walking—with his beautiful sweetheart; and there were the very ferns that he thought she would admire; and here the very point in the fir-wood where he would stop her and ask her to look out on the blue sea, with Inch Kenneth, and Ulva, and Staffa all lying in the sunlight, and the razor-fish of land—Coll and Tiree—at the horizon. But instead of being proud and glad, he was almost afraid. He was so anxious that everything should please her that he dared scarce bid her look at anything. He had himself superintended the mending of the steep path; but even now the recent rains had left some puddles. Would she not consider the moist warm odours of this larch-wood as too oppressive?

"What is that?" she said, suddenly.

There was a sound far below them of the striking of oars in the water, and another sound of one or two men monotonously chanting a rude sort of chorus.

"They are taking the gig on to the yacht," said he

"But what are they singing?"

"Oh, that is *Fhir a bhata*," said he; "it is the common boat-song. It means, *Good-bye to you, Boatman, a hundred times, wherever you may be going*."

"It is very striking—very effective, to hear singing, and not see the people," she said. "It is the very prettiest introduction to a scene; I wonder it is not oftener used. Do you think they could write me down the words and music of that song?"

"Oh, no, I think not," said he, with a nervous laugh. "But you will find something like it, no doubt, in your book."

So they passed on through the plantation; and at last they came to an open glade; and here was a deep chasm spanned by a curious old bridge of stone almost hidden by ivy; and there was a brawling stream dashing down over the rocks and flinging spray all over the briars and queen of the meadow and foxgloves on either bank.

"That is very pretty," said she: and then he was eager to tell her that this little glen was even more beautiful when the rowan-trees showed their rich clusters of scarlet berries.

"Those bushes there, you mean," said she. "The mountain-ash."

"Yes."

"Ah," she said, "I never see those scarlet berries without wishing I was a dark woman. If my hair were black, I would wear nothing else in it."

By this time they had climbed well up the cliff; and presently they came on the open plateau on which stood Castle Dare, with its gaunt walls, and its rambling courtyards, and its stretch of damp lawn with a few fuchsia-bushes and orange-lilies that did not give a very ornamental look to the place.

"We have had heavy rains of late," he said, hastily; he hoped the house and its surroundings did not look too dismal.

And when they went inside and passed through the sombre

dining-hall, with its huge fire-place, and its dark weapons, and its few portraits dimly visible in the dusk, he said—

"It is very gloomy in the day-time; but it is more cheerful at night."

And when they reached the small drawing-room he was anxious to draw her attention away from the antiquated furniture and the nondescript decoration by taking her to the window and showing her the great breadth of the summer sea, with the far islands, and the brown-sailed boat of the Gometra men coming back from Staffa. But presently in came Janet; and would take the fair stranger away to her room; and was as attentive to her as if the one were a great princess, and the other a meek serving-woman. And by and by Macleod, having seen his other guest provided for, went into the library, and shut himself in, and sate down—in a sort of stupor. He could almost have imagined that the whole business of the morning was a dream; so strange did it seem to him that Gertrude White should be living and breathing under the same roof with himself.

Nature herself seemed to have conspired with Macleod to welcome and charm this fair guest. He had often spoken to her of the sunsets that shone over the western seas; and he had wondered whether, during her stay in the north, she would see some strange sight that would remain for ever a blaze of colour in her memory. And now on this very first evening there was a spectacle seen from the high windows of Dare that filled her with astonishment and caused her to send quickly for her father, who was burrowing among the old armour. The sun had just gone down. The western sky was of the colour of a soda-water bottle become glorified; and in this vast breadth of shining clear green lay one long island of cloud—a pure scarlet. Then the sky overhead and the sea far below them were both of a soft roseate purple; and Fladda and Staffa and Lunga, out at the horizon, were almost black against that flood of green light. When he asked her if she had brought her water-colours with her, she smiled. She was not likely to attempt to put anything like that down on paper.

Then they adjourned to the big hall, which was now lit up with candles; and Major Stewart had remained to dinner:

and the gallant soldier, glad to have a merry evening away from his sighing wife, did his best to promote the cheerfulness of the party. Moreover, Miss White had got rid of her headache, and showed a greater brightness of face; so that both the old lady at the head of the table and her niece Janet had to confess to themselves that this English girl who was like to tear Keith Macleod away from them was very pretty, and had an amiable look, and was soft and fine and delicate in her manners and speech. The charming simplicity of her costume too; had anybody ever seen a dress more beautiful with less pretence of attracting notice? Her very hands: they seemed objects fitted to be placed on a cushion of blue velvet under a glass shade, so white and small and perfectly formed were they. That was what the kindly-hearted Janet thought. She did not ask herself how those hands would answer if called upon to help—amid the grime and smoke of a shepherd's hut—the shepherd's wife to patch together a pair of homespun trousers for the sailor-son coming back from the sea.

"And now," said Keith Macleod to his fair neighbour, when Hamish had put the claret and the whisky on the table, "since your head is well now, would you like to hear the pipes? It is an old custom of the house. My mother would think it strange to have it omitted," he added in a lower voice.

"Oh, if it is a custom of the house," she said coldly—for she thought it was inconsiderate of him to risk bringing back her headache—"I have no objection whatever."

And so he turned to Hamish and said something in the Gaelic. Hamish replied in English, and loud enough for Miss White to hear—

"It is no pibroch there will be this night, for Donald is away."

"Away?"

"Ay, just that. When he wass come back from the boat, he will say to me, 'Hamish, it is no more of me or my pipes they want at Dare; and I am going away; and they can get some one else to play the pipes.' And I wass saying to him then, 'Donald, do not be a foolish lad; and if the English lady will not want the pibroch you made for her, perhaps at another time she will want it.' And now, Sir Keith, it is Maggie MacFarlane;

she wass coming up from Loch-na-Keal this afternoon, and who was it will she meet but our Donald, and he wass saying to her, 'It is to Tobermory now that I am going, Maggie; and I will try to get a ship there; for it is no more of me or my pipes they will want at Dare.'"

This was Hamish's story; and the keen hawk-like eye of him was fixed on the English lady's face all the time he spoke in his struggling and halting fashion.

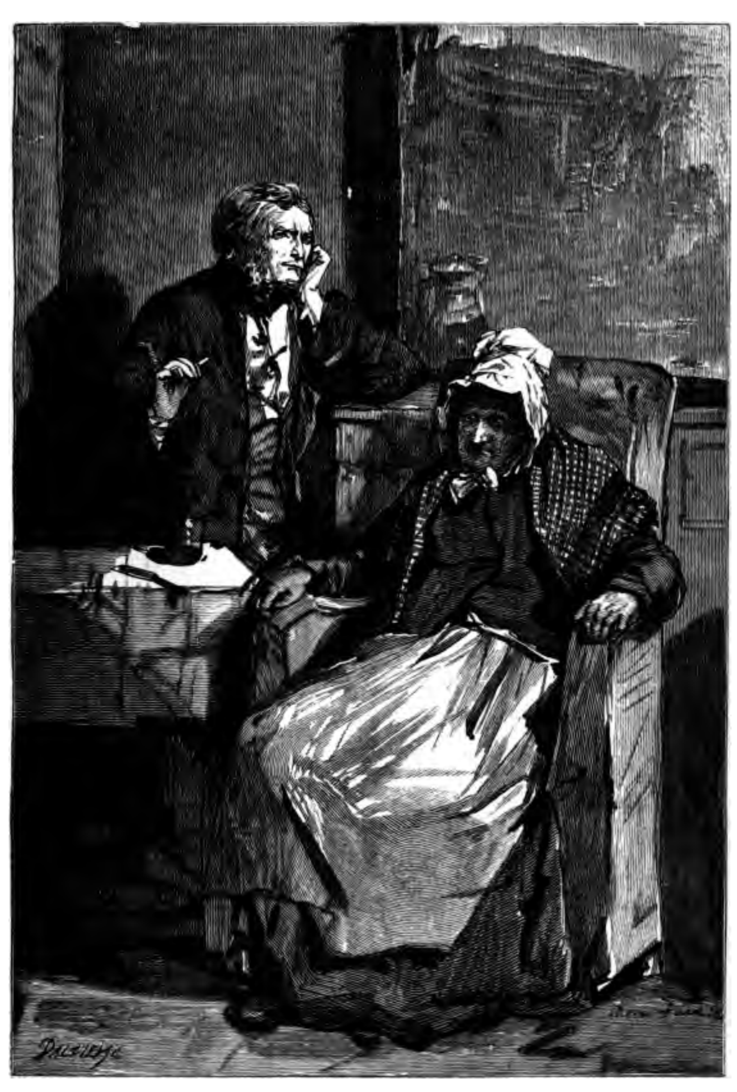
"Confound the young rascal!" Macleod said, with his face grown red. "I suppose I shall have to send a messenger to Tobermory and apologize to him for interrupting him to-day." And then he turned to Miss White. "They are like a set of children," he said, "with their pride and petulance."

This is all that needs be said about the manner of Miss White's coming to Dare, besides these two circumstances. First of all, whether it was that Macleod was too flurried, and Janet too busy, and Lady Macleod too indifferent to attend to such trifles, the fact remains that no one, on Miss White's entering the house, had thought of presenting her with a piece of white heather, which, as every one knows, gives good health and good fortune and a long life to your friend. Again, Hamish seemed to have acquired a serious prejudice against her from the very outset. That night, when Castle Dare was asleep, and the old dame Christina and her husband were seated by themselves in the servants' room, and Hamish was having his last pipe, and both were talking over the great events of the day, Christina said, in her native tongue,—

"And what do you think now of the English lady, Hamish?"

Hamish answered with an old and sinister saying:

"*A fool would he be that would burn his harp to warm her.*"



A DARK SAYING.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE GRAVE OF MACLEOD OF MACLEOD.

The monotonous sound of the waterfall, so far from disturbing the new guest of Castle Dare, only soothed her to rest; and after the various fatigues—if not the emotions—of the day, she slept well. But in the very midst of the night she was startled by some loud commotion that seemed to prevail both within and without the house; and when she was fully awakened it appeared to her that the whole earth was being shaken to pieces in the storm. The wind howled in the chimneys; the rain dashed on the window-panes with a rattle as of musketry; far below she could hear the awful booming of the Atlantic breakers. The gusts that drove against the high house seemed ready to tear it from its foothold of rock and whirl it inland; or was it the sea itself that was rising in its thunderous power to sweep away this bauble from the face of the mighty cliffs? And then the wild and desolate morning that followed! Through the bewilderment of the running water on the panes she looked abroad on the tempest-riven sea—a slate-coloured waste of hurrying waves with windswept streaks of foam on them; and on the louring and ever-changing clouds. The fuchsia-bushes on the lawn tossed and bent before the wind; the few orange-lilies, wet as they were, burned like fire in this world of cold greens and greys. And then as she stood and gazed, she made out the only sign of life that was visible. There was a cornfield below the larch-plantation; and though the corn was all laid flat by the wet and the wind, a cow and her calf that had strayed into the field seemed to have no difficulty in finding a rich moist breakfast. Then a small girl appeared, vainly trying with one hand to keep her kerchief on her head, while with the other she threw stones at the marauders. By and by even these disappeared; and there was nothing visible outside but that hurrying and desolate sea, and the wet, bedraggled, comfortless shore. She turned away with a shudder.

All that day Keith Macleod was in despair. As for himself, he would have had sufficient joy in the mere consciousness of the presence of this beautiful creature. His eyes followed her with a constant delight; whether she took up a book, or examined the cunning spring of a sixteenth century dagger, or turned to the dripping panes. He would have been content even to sit and listen to Mr. White sententiously lecturing Lady Macleod about the Renaissance, knowing that from time to time those beautiful, tender eyes would meet his. But what would she think of it? Would she consider this the normal condition of life in the Highlands—this being boxed up in an old-fashioned room, with doors and windows firmly closed against the wind and the wet, with a number of people trying to keep up some sort of social intercourse and not very well succeeding? She had looked at the portraits in the dining-hall—looming darkly from their black back-grounds, though two or three were in resplendent uniforms; she had examined all his trophies of the chase—skins, horns, and what not—in the outer corridor; she had opened the piano, and almost started back from the discords produced by the feebly jangling old keys.

"You do not cultivate music much," she had said to Janet Macleod, with a smile.

"No," answered Janet, seriously. "We have but little use for music here—except to sing to a child now and again, and you know you do not want the piano for that."

And then the return to the cold window, with the constant rain and the beating of the white surge on the black rocks. The imprisonment to him became torture—became maddening. What if he were suddenly to murder this old man and stop for ever his insufferable prosing about Berna da Siena and Andrea Mantegna? It seemed so strange to hear him talk of the unearthly calm of Raphael's "St. Michael"—of the beautiful, still landscape of it, and the mysterious joy on the face of the angel—and to listen at the same moment to the wild roar of the Atlantic around the rocks of Mull. If Macleod had been alone with the talker, he might have gone to sleep. It was like the tolling of a bell. "The artist passes away, but he leaves his soul behind . . . we can judge by his work of the joy he must have experienced in

creation, of the splendid dreams that have visited him, of the triumph of completion. . . . . Life without an object—a pursuit demanding the sacrifice of our constant care—what is it? The existence of a pig is nobler—a pig is of some use. . . . We are independent of weather in a great city; we do not need to care for the seasons; you take a hansom and drive to the National Gallery, and there all at once you find yourself in the soft Italian climate, with the most beautiful women and great heroes of chivalry all around you, and with those quaint and loving presentations of sacred stories that tell of a time when Art was proud to be the meek handmaid of Religion. My dear Lady Macleod, there is a 'Holy Family' of Giotto's——"

So it went on; and Macleod grew sick at heart to think of the impression that this funereal day must have had on the mind of the Fair Stranger. But as they sate at dinner that evening, Hamish came in and said a few words to his master. Instantly Macleod's face lighted up; and quite a new animation came into his manner.

"Do you know what Hamish says?" he cried,—"that the night is quite fine! And Hamish has heard our talking of seeing the cathedral of Iona by moonlight; and he says the moon will be up by ten. And what do you say to running over now? You know we cannot take you in the yacht; for there is no good anchorage at Iona; but we can take you in a very good and safe boat; and it will be an adventure to go out in the night-time."

It was an adventure that neither Mr. White nor his daughter seemed too eager to undertake; but the urgent vehemence of the young man—who had discovered that it was now a fine and clear starlight night—soon overcame their doubts; and there was a general hurry of preparation. The desolation of the day, he eagerly thought, would be forgotten in the romance of this night excursion. And surely she would be charmed by the beauty of the starlit sky, and the loneliness of the voyage, and their wandering over the ruins in the solemn moonlight?

Thick boots and waterproofs: these were his peremptory instructions. And then he led the way down the slippery path; and he had a tight hold of her arm; and if he talked to her in a low voice so that none should overhear—it is the way of lovers

under the silence of the stars. They reached the pier, and the wet stone steps; and here, despite the stars, it was so dark that perforce she had to permit him to lift her off the lowest step and place her in security in what seemed to her a great hole of some kind or other. She knew, however, that she was in a boat: for there was a swaying hither and thither even in this sheltered corner. She saw other figures arrive—black between her and the sky—and she heard her father's voice above. Then he, too, got into the boat: the two men forward hauled up the huge lug-sail; and presently there was a rippling line of sparkling white stars on each side of the boat, burning for a second or two on the surface of the black water.

"I don't know who is responsible for this madness," Mr. White said—and the voice from inside the great waterproof coat sounded as if it meant to be jocular—"but really, Gerty, to be on the open Atlantic, in the middle of the night, in an open boat——"

"My dear sir," Macleod said, laughing, "you are as safe as if you were in bed. But I am responsible in the mean time, for I have the tiller. Oh, we shall be over in plenty of time to be clear of the banks."

"What did you say?"

"Well," Macleod admitted, "there are some banks, you know, in the Sound of Iona; and on a dark night they are a little awkward when the tide is low—but I am not going to frighten you——"

"I hope we shall have nothing much worse than this," said Mr. White, seriously.

For indeed the sea, after the squally morning, was running pretty high; and occasionally a cloud of spray came rattling over the bows, causing Macleod's guests to pull their waterproofs still more tightly round their necks. But what mattered the creaking of the cordage, and the plunging of the boat, and the rushing of the seas, so long as that beautiful clear sky shone overhead?

"Gertrude," said he, in a low voice, "do you see the phosphorus-stars on the waves? I never saw them burn more brightly."

"They are very beautiful," said she. "When do we get to land, Keith?"

"Oh, pretty soon," said he. "You are not anxious to get to land?"

"It is stormier than I expected."

"Oh, this is nothing," said he. "I thought you would enjoy it."

However, that summer night's sail was like to prove a tougher business than even Macleod had bargained for. They had been out scarcely twenty minutes when Miss White heard the man at the bow call out something, which she could not understand, to his master. She saw Macleod crane his neck forward, as if looking ahead; and she herself, looking in that direction, could perceive that from the horizon almost to the zenith the stars had become invisible.

"It may be a little bit squally," he said to her, "but we shall soon be under the lee of Iona. Perhaps you had better hold on to something."

The advice was not ill-timed; for almost as he spoke the first gust of the squall struck the boat, and there was a sound as if everything had been torn asunder and sent overboard. Then, as she righted just in time to meet the crash of the next wave, it seemed as though the world had grown perfectly black around them. The terrified woman seated there could no longer make out Macleod's figure; it was impossible to speak amid this roar; it almost seemed to her that she was alone with those howling winds and heaving waves—at night on the open sea. The wind rose, and the sea too; she heard the men call out and Macleod answer; and all the time the boat was creaking and groaning as she was flung high on the mighty waves only to go staggering down into the awful troughs beyond.

"Oh, Keith!" she cried—and involuntarily she seized his arm, "are we in danger?"

He could not hear what she said; but he understood the mute appeal. Quickly disengaging his arm—for it was the arm that was working the tiller—he called to her—

"We are all right. If you are afraid, get to the bottom of the boat!"

But unhappily she did not hear this; for as he called to her, a heavy sea struck the bows, sprung high in the air, and then fell over them in a deluge which nearly choked her. She understood, though, his throwing away her hand. It was the triumph of brute selfishness in the moment of danger. They were drowning; and he would not let her come near him! And so she shrieked aloud for her father.

Hearing those shrieks Macleod called to one of the two men, who came stumbling along in the dark and got hold of the tiller. There was a slight lull in the storm; and he caught her two hands and held her.

"Gertrude, what is the matter? You are perfectly safe; and so is your father. For Heaven's sake keep still: if you get up you will be knocked overboard!"

"Where is papa?" she cried.

"I am here—I am all right, Gerty!" was the answer—which came from the bottom of the boat, into which Mr. White had very prudently slipped.

And then as they got under the lee of the island they found themselves in smoother water, though from time to time squalls came over that threatened to flatten the great lug-sail right on to the waves.

"Come now, Gertrude," said Macleod, "we shall be ashore in a few minutes; and you are not frightened of a squall?"

He had his arm round her; and he held her tight; but she did not answer. At last she saw a light—a small, glimmering orange thing that quivered apparently a hundred miles off.

"See!" he said. "We are close by. And it may clear up to-night after all."

Then he shouted to one of the men:

"Duncan, we will not try the quay to-night: we will go into the Martyr's Bay."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

It was about a quarter of an hour afterwards that—almost benumbed with fear—she discovered that the boat was in smooth water; and then there was a loud clatter of the sail coming down; and she heard two sailors calling to each other, and one of them seemed to have got overboard. There was absolutely nothing

visible—not even a distant light; but it was raining heavily. Then she knew that Macleod had moved away from her; and she thought she heard a splash in the water; and then a voice beside her said—

"Gertrude, will you get up? You must let me carry you ashore."

And she found herself in his arms—carried as lightly as though she had been a young lamb or a fawn from the hills; but she knew from the slow way of his walking that he was going through the sea. Then he set her on the shore.

"Take my hand," said he.

"But where is papa?"

"Just behind us," said he, "on Duncan's shoulders. Duncan will bring him along. Come, darling!"

"But where are we going?"

"There is a little inn near the cathedral. And perhaps it will clear up to-night: and we will have a fine sail back again to Dare."

She shuddered. Not for ten thousand worlds would she pass through once more that seething pit of howling sounds and raging seas.

He held her arm firmly; and she stumbled along through the darkness, not knowing whether she was walking through seaweed, or pools of water, or wet corn. And at last they came to a door; and the door was opened; and there was a blaze of orange light; and they entered—all dripping and unrecognizable—the warm, snug little place, to the astonishment of a handsome young lady who proved to be their hostess.

"Dear me, Sir Keith," said she at length, "is it you indeed! And you will not be going back to Dare to-night."

In fact, when Mr. White arrived, it was soon made evident that going back to Dare that night was out of the question; for somehow or other the old gentleman, despite his waterproofs, had managed to get soaked through; and he was determined to go to bed at once, so as to have his clothes dried. And so the hospitalities of the little inn were requisitioned to the utmost; and as there was no whisky to be had, they had to content themselves with hot tea; and then they all retired to rest for the night,

convinced that the moonlight visitation of the ruins had to be postponed.

But next day—such are the rapid changes in the Highlands—broke blue and fair and shining; and Miss Gertrude White was amazed to find that the awful Sound she had come along on the previous night was now brilliant in the most beautiful colours—for the tide was low, and the yellow sand-banks were shining through the blue waters of the sea. And would she not, seeing that the boat was lying down at the quay now, sail round the island, and see the splendid sight of the Atlantic breaking on the wild coast on the western side? She hesitated; and then, when it was suggested that she might walk across the island, she eagerly accepted that alternative. They set out, on this hot, bright, beautiful day.

But where he, eager to please her and show her the beauties of the Highlands, saw lovely white sands, and smiling plains of verdure, and far views of the sunny sea, she only saw loneliness, and desolation, and a constant threatening of death from the fierce Atlantic. Could anything have been more beautiful—he said to himself—than this magnificent scene that lay all around her when they reached a far point on the western shore?—in face of them the wildly-rushing seas, coming thundering on to the rocks, and springing so high into the air that the snow-white foam showed black against the glare of the sky; the nearer islands gleaming with a touch of brown on their sunward side; the Dutchman's Cap, with its long brim and conical centre, and Lunga, also like a cap, but with a shorter brim and a high peak in front, becoming a trifle blue; then Coll and Tiree lying like a pale stripe on the horizon; while far away in the north the mountains of Rum and Skye were faint and spectral in the haze of the sunlight. Then the wild coast around them; with its splendid masses of granite; and its spare grass a brown-green in the warm sun; and its bays of silver sand; and its sea-birds whiter than the white clouds that came sailing over the blue. She recognized only the awfulness and the loneliness of that wild shore; with its suggestions of crashing storms in the night-time and the cries of drowning men dashed helplessly on the cruel rocks. She was very silent all the way back; though he told

her stories of the fairies that used to inhabit those sandy and grassy plains.

And could anything have been more magical than the beauty of that evening, after the storm had altogether died away? The red sunset sank behind the dark olive-green of the hills; a pale, clear twilight took its place, and shone over those mystic ruins that were the object of many a thought and many a pilgrimage in the far past and forgotten years; and then the stars began to glimmer as the distant shores and the sea grew dark; and then, still later on, a wonderful radiance rose behind the low hills of Mull, and across the waters of the Sound came a belt of quivering light as the white moon sailed slowly up into the sky. Would they venture out now, into the silence? There was an odour of new-mown hay in the night air. Far away they could hear the murmuring of the waves around the rocks. They did not speak a word as they walked along to those solemn ruins overlooking the sea that were now a mass of mysterious shadow, except where the eastern walls and the tower were touched by the silvery light that had just come into the heavens.

And in silence they entered the still churchyard too; and passed the graves. The buildings seemed to rise above them in a darkened majesty; before them was a portal through which a glimpse of the moonlit sky was visible. Would they enter, then?

"I am almost afraid," she said, in a low voice to her companion, and the hand on his arm trembled.

But no sooner had she spoken, than there was a sudden sound in the night that caused her heart to jump. All over them and around them, as it seemed, there was a wild uproar of wings; and the clear sky above them was darkened by a cloud of objects wheeling this way and that until at length they swept by overhead as if blown by a whirlwind, and crossed the clear moonlight in a dense body. She had quickly clung to him in her fear.

"It is only the jackdaws—there are hundreds of them," he said to her; but even his voice sounded strange in this hollow building.

For they had now entered by the open doorway; and all around them were the tall and crumbling pillars, and the arched

windows, and ruined walls, here and there catching the sharp light of the moonlight, here and there showing soft and grey with a reflected light, with spaces of black shadow which led to unknown recesses. And always overhead the clear sky with its pale stars; and always, far away, the melancholy sound of the sea.

"Do you know where you are standing now?" said he, almost sadly. "You are standing on the grave of Macleod of Macleod."

She started aside with a slight exclamation.

"I do not think they bury any one in here now," said he, gently. And then he added, "Do you know that I have chosen the place for my grave? It is away out at one of the Treshnish islands; it is a bay looking to the west; there is no one living on that island. It is only a fancy of mine—to rest for ever and ever with no sound around you but the sea and the winds—no step coming near you, and no voice but the waves."

"Oh, Keith, you should not say such things: you frighten me," she said in a trembling voice.

Another voice broke in upon them, harsh and pragmatical.

"Do you know, Sir Keith," said Mr. White, briskly, "that the moonlight is clear enough to let you make out this plan? But I can't get the building to correspond. This is the chancel, I believe; but where are the cloisters?"

"I will show you," Macleod said; and he led his companion through the silent and solemn place, her father following. In the darkness they passed through an archway, and were about to step out on to a piece of grass, when suddenly Miss White uttered a wild scream of terror and sank helplessly to the ground. She had slipped from his arm, but in an instant he had caught her again and had raised her on his bended knee, and was calling to her with kindly words.

"Gertrude, Gertrude!" he said. "What is the matter? Won't you speak to me?"

And just as she was pulling herself together the innocent cause of this commotion was discovered. It was a black lamb that had come up in the most friendly manner, and had rubbed its head against her hand to attract her notice.

"Gertrude, see! it is only a lamb! It comes up to me every time I visit the ruins; look!"

And, indeed, she was mightily ashamed of herself; and pretended to be vastly interested in the ruins; and was quite charmed with the view of the Sound in the moonlight, with the low hills beyond now grown quite black; but all the same she was very silent as they walked back to the inn. And she was pale and thoughtful too, while they were having their frugal supper of bread and milk; and very soon pleading fatigue, she retired. But all the same, when Mr. White went up-stairs, some time after, he had been but a short while in his room when he heard a tapping at the door. He said, "Come in," and his daughter entered. He was surprised by the unusual look of her face—a sort of piteous look, as of one ill at ease, and yet ashamed to speak.

"What is it, child?" said he.

She regarded him for a second with that piteous look; and then tears slowly gathered in her eyes.

"Papa," said she, in a sort of half hysterical way, "I want you to take me away from here. It frightens me. I don't know what it is. He was talking to me about graves——"

And here she burst out crying, and sobbed bitterly.

"Oh, nonsense, child!" her father said, "your nervous system must have been shaken last night by that storm. I have seen a strange look about your face all day. It was certainly a mistake our coming here; you are not fitted for this savage life."

She grew more composed. She sate down for a few minutes; and her father, taking out a small flask which had been filled from a bottle of brandy sent over during the day from Castle Dare, poured out a little of the spirit, added some water, and made her drink the dose as a sleeping-draught.

"Ah, well, you know, papa," said she, as she rose to leave, and she bestowed a very pretty smile on him, "it is all in the way of experience, isn't it? and an artist should experience everything. But there is just a little too much about graves and ghosts in these parts for me. And I suppose we shall go to-morrow to see some cave or other where two or three hundred men, women, and children were murdered!"

"I hope in going back we shall not be as near our own grave as we were last night," her father observed.

"And Keith Macleod laughs at it," she said, "and says it was unfortunate we got a wetting!"

And so she went to bed; and the sea-air had dealt well with her; and she had no dreams at all of shipwrecks, or of black familiars in moonlit shrines. Why should her sleep be disturbed because that night she had put her foot on the grave of the chief of the Macleods?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE UMPIRE.

NEXT morning, with all this wonderful world of sea and islands shining in the early sunlight, Mr. White and his daughter were down by the shore walking along the white sands, and chatting idly as they went. From time to time they looked across the fair summer seas to the distant cliffs of Bourg; and each time they looked a certain small white speck seemed coming nearer. That was the *Umpire;* and Keith Macleod was on board of her. He had started at an unknown hour of the night to bring the yacht over from her anchorage. He would not have his beautiful Fionaghal, who had come as a stranger to these far lands, go back to Dare in a common open boat with stones for ballast.

"This is the loneliest place I have ever seen," Miss Gertrude White was saying on this the third morning after her arrival. "It seems scarcely in the world at all. The sea cuts you off from everything you know; it would have been nothing if we had come by rail."

They walked on in silence, the blue waves beside them curling a crisp white on the smooth sands.

"Papa," said she, at length, "I suppose if I lived here for six months no one in England would remember anything about me? If I were mentioned at all, they would think I was dead. Perhaps some day I might meet some one from England; and I would

have to say, 'Don't you know who I am? Did you never hear of one called Gertrude White? I was Gertrude White.'"

"No doubt," said her father, cautiously.

"And when Mr. Lemuel's portrait of me appears in the Academy, people would be saying, 'Who is that? *Miss Gertrude White as Juliet?* Ah, there was an actress of that name. Or was she an amateur? She married somebody in the Highlands. I suppose she is dead now?'"

"It is one of the most gratifying instances, Gerty, of the position you have made," her father observed, in his slow and sententious way, "that Mr. Lemuel should be willing, after having refused to exhibit at the Academy for so many years, to make an exception in the case of your portrait."

"Well, I hope my face will not get burned by the sea-air and the sun," she said. "You know he wants two or three more sittings. And do you know, papa, I have sometimes thought of asking you to tell me honestly—not to encourage me with flattery, you know—whether my face has really that high-strung pitch of expression when I am about to drink the poison in the cell. Do I really look like Mr. Lemuel's portrait of me?"

"It is your very self, Gerty," her father said with decision. "But then Mr. Lemuel is a man of genius. Who but himself could have caught the very soul of your acting and fixed it on canvas?"

She hesitated for a moment, and then there was a flush of genuine enthusiastic pride mantling on her forehead as she said frankly—

"Well, then, I wish I could see myself!"

Mr. White said nothing. He had watched this daughter of his through the long winter months. Occasionally, when he heard her utter sentiments such as these—and when he saw her keenly sensitive to the flattery bestowed upon her by the people assembled at Mr. Lemuel's little gatherings, he had asked himself whether it was possible she could ever marry Sir Keith Macleod. But he was too wise to risk re-awakening her rebellious fits by any encouragement. In any case, he had some experience of this young lady; and what was the use of combating one of her moods at five o'clock, when at six o'clock she would be arguing in the

contrary direction, and at seven convinced that the *via media* was the straight road? Moreover, if the worst came to the worst, there would be some compensation in the fact of Miss White changing her name for that of Lady Macleod.

Just as quickly she changed her mood on the present occasion. She was looking again far over the darkly-blue and ruffled seas towards the white-sailed yacht.

"He must have gone away in the dark to get that boat for us," she said, musingly. "Poor fellow, how very generous and kind he is! Sometimes—shall I make the confession, papa?—I wish he had picked out some one who could better have returned his warmth of feeling."

She called it a confession; but it was a question. And her father answered more bluntly than she had quite expected.

"I am not much of an authority on such points," said he with a dry smile; "but I should have said, Gerty, that you have not been quite so effusive towards Sir Keith Macleod as some young ladies would have been on meeting their sweetheart after a long absence."

The pale face flushed, and she answered hastily—

"But you know, papa, when you are knocked about from one boat to another, and expecting to be ill one minute, and drowned the next, you don't have your temper improved, have you? And then perhaps you have been expecting a little too much romance—and you find your Highland chieftain handing down loaves, with all the people in the steamer staring at him. But I really mean to make it up to him, papa, if I could only get settled down for a day or two and get into my own ways. Oh, dear me!—this sun—it is too awfully dreadful. When I appear before Mr. Lemuel again, I shall be a mulatto!"

And as they walked along the shining sands, with the waves monotonously breaking, the white-sailed yacht came nearer and more near; and indeed the old *Umpire*, broad-beamed and heavy as she was, looked quite stately and swan-like as she came over the blue water. And they saw the gig lowered; and the four oars keeping rhythmical time; and presently they could make out the browned and glad face of Macleod.

"Why did you take so much trouble?" said she to him—and she took his hand in a very kind way as he stepped on shore. "We could very well have gone back in the boat."

"Oh, but I want to take you round by Loch Tua," said he, looking with great gratitude into those friendly eyes. "It was no trouble at all. And will you step into the gig now?"

He took her hand and guided her along the rocks until she reached the boat; and he assisted her father too. Then they pushed off; and it was with a good swing the men sent the boat through the lapping waves. And here was Hamish standing by the gangway to receive them; and he was gravely respectful to the stranger lady, as he assisted her to get up the small wooden steps; but there was no light of welcome in the keen grey eyes. He quickly turned away from her to give his orders; for Hamish was on this occasion skipper, and had donned a smart suit of blue with brass buttons. Perhaps he would have been prouder of his buttons, and of himself, and of the yacht he had sailed for so many years, if it had been any other than Gertrude White who had now stepped on board.

But on the other hand, Miss White was quite charmed with this shapely vessel and all its contents. If the frugal ways and commonplace duties and conversation of Castle Dare had somewhat disappointed her, and had seemed to her not quite in accordance with the heroic traditions of the clans, here, at least, was something which she could recognize as befitting her notion of the name and position of Sir Keith Macleod. Surely it must be with a certain masterful sense of possession that he would stand on those white decks, independent of all the world besides, with those sinewy, sun-browned, handsome fellows ready to go anywhere with him at his bidding? It is true that Macleod, in showing her over the yacht, seemed to know far too much about tinned meats; and he exhibited with some pride a cunning device for the stowage of soda-water; and he even went the length of explaining to her the capacities of the linen-chest; but then she could not fail to see that in his eagerness to interest and amuse her, he was as garrulous as a schoolboy showing to his companion a new toy. Miss White sat down in the saloon; and

Macleod, who had but little experience in attending on ladies, and knew of but one thing that it was proper to recommend, said,—

"And will you have a cup of tea now, Gertrude? Johnny will get it to you in a moment."

"No, thank you," said she, with a smile; for she knew not how often he had offered her a cup of tea since her arrival in the Highlands. "But do you know, Keith, your yacht has a terrible bachelor look about it? All the comforts of it are in this saloon and in those two nice little state-rooms. Your lady's cabin looks very empty; it is too elegant and fine, as if you were afraid to leave a book or a matchbox in it. Now if you were to turn this into a lady's yacht, you would have to remove that pipe-rack, and the guns and rifles and bags."

"Oh," said he anxiously, "I hope you do not smell any tobacco?"

"Not at all," said she. "It was only a fancy. Of course you are not likely to turn your yacht into a lady's yacht."

He started and looked at her. But she had spoken quite thoughtlessly, and had now turned to her father.

When they went on deck again they found that the *Umpire*, beating up in the face of a light northerly breeze, had run out for a long tack almost to the Dutchman's Cap; and from a certain distance they could see the grim shores of this desolate island, with its faint tinge of green grass over the brown of its plateau of rock. And then Hamish called out, "Ready about!" and presently they were slowly leaving behind that lonely Dutchman and making away for the distant entrance to Loch Tua. The breeze was slight; they made but little way; far on the blue waters they watched the white gulls sitting buoyant; and the sun was hot on their hands. What did they talk about in this summer idleness? Many a time he had dreamed of his sailing over the clear seas with the fair Fionaghal from the south, until at times his heart, grown sick with yearning, was ready to despair of the impossible. And yet here she was sitting on a deck-stool near him—the wide-apart, long-lashed eyes occasionally regarding him—a neglected book open on her lap—the small gloved hands toying with the cover. Yet there was no word of

love spoken. There was only a friendly conversation, and the idle passing of a summer day. It was something to know that her breathing was near him.

Then the breeze quite died away, and they were left altogether motionless on the glassy blue sea. The great sails hung limp, without a single flap or quiver in them; the red ensign clung to the jigger-mast; Hamish, though he stood by the tiller, did not even put his hand on that bold and notable representation in wood of the sea-serpent.

"Come now, Hamish," Macleod said, fearing this monotonous idleness would weary his fair guest, "you will tell us one of the old stories that you used to tell me when I was a boy."

Hamish had indeed told the young Macleod many a mysterious tale of magic and adventure, but he was not disposed to repeat any one of these in broken English in order to please this lady from the south.

"It is no more of the stories I hef now, Sir Keith," said he. "It wass a long time since I had the stories."

"Oh, I could construct one myself," said Miss White, lightly. "Don't I know how they all begin? '*There was once a king in Erin, and he had a son; and this son it was who would take the world for his pillow. But before he set out on his travels, he took counsel of the falcon, and the hoodie, and the otter. And the falcon said to him, Go to the right; and the hoodie said to him, You will be wise now if you go to the left; but the otter said to him, Now take my advice,*' &c., &c."

"You have been a diligent student," Macleod said, laughing heartily. "And indeed you might go on with the story and finish it; for who knows now when we shall get back to Dare?"

It was after a long period of thus lying in dead calm—with the occasional appearance of a guillemot on the surface of the shining blue sea—that Macleod's sharply observant eye was attracted by an odd thing that appeared far away at the horizon.

"What do you think is that now?" said he, with a smile.

They looked steadfastly, and saw only a thin line of silver light, almost like the back of a knife, in the distant dark blue.

"The track of a seal swimming under water," Mr. White suggested.

"Or a shoal of fish," his daughter said.

"Watch!"

The sharp line of light slowly spread; a trembling silver-grey took the place of the dark blue; it looked as if invisible fingers were rushing out and over the glassy surface. Then they felt a cool freshness in the hot air; the red ensign swayed a bit; then the great mainsail flapped idly; and finally the breeze came gently blowing over the sea, and on again they went through the now rippling water. And as the slow time passed, in the glare of the sunlight, Staffa lay on the still water a dense mass of shadow; and they went by Lunga; and they drew near to the point of Gometra, where the black skarts were sitting on the exposed rocks. It was like a dream of sunlight, and fair colours, and summer quiet.

"I cannot believe," said she to him, "that all those fierce murders and revenges took place in such beautiful scenes as these. How could they?"

And then, in the broad and still waters of Loch Tua, with the lovely rocks of Ulva close by them, they were again becalmed; and now it was decided that they should leave the yacht there at anchor, and should get into the gig and be quietly pulled through the shallow channel between Ulva and Mull that connects Loch Tua with Loch-na-Keal. Macleod had been greatly favoured by the day chosen at haphazard for this water promenade; at the end of it he was gladdened to hear Miss White say that she had never seen anything so lovely on the face of the earth.

And yet it was merely a question of weather. To-morrow they might come back and find the water a ruffled leaden colour; the waves washing over the rocks; Ben-More invisible behind driving clouds. But now, as those three sat in the stern of the gig, and were gently pulled along by the sweep of the oars, it seemed to one at least of them that she must have got into fairyland. The rocky shores of Ulva lay on one side of this broad and winding channel; the flatter shores of Mull on the other; and between lay a perfect mirror of water in which everything was so accurately reflected that it was quite impossible to define the line at which the water and the land met. In fact, so vivid was the reflection of the blue and white sky on the

surface of the water that it appeared to her as if the boat were suspended in mid-air: a sky below, a sky above. And then the beauty of the landscape that enclosed this wonderful mirror—the soft green foliage above the Ulva rocks; the brilliant yellow brown of the sea-weed, with here and there a grey heron standing solitary and silent as a ghost over the pools; ahead of them, towering above this flat and shining and beautiful landscape, the awful majesty of the mountains around Loch-na-Keal—the monarch of them, Ben-More, showing a cone of dark and thunderous purple under a long and heavy swathe of cloud. Far away, too, on their right, stretched the splendid rampart of the Gribun cliffs, a soft sunlight on the grassy greens of their summits; a pale and brilliant blue in the shadows of the huge and yawning caves. And so still it was, and the air so fine and sweet: it was a day for the idling of happy lovers.

What jarred, then? Not the silent appearance of the head of a seal in that shining plain of blue and white; for the poor old fellow only regarded the boat for a second or two with his large and pathetic eyes, and then quietly disappeared. Perhaps it was this—that Miss White was leaning over the side of the boat, and admiring very much the wonderful hues of groups of seaweed, below, that were all distinctly visible in the marvellously clear water. There were beautiful green plants that spread their flat fingers over the silver-white sands; and huge rolls of purple and sombre brown; and long strings that came up to the surface—the traceries and decorations of these haunts of the mermaid.

"It is like a pantomime," she said. "You would expect to see a burst of limelight and Neptune appearing with a silver trident and crown. Well, it only shows that the scene-painters are nearer nature than most people imagine. I should never have thought there was anything so beautiful in the sea."

And then again she said, when they had rounded Ulva, and got a glimpse of the open Atlantic again,

"Where is it, Keith, you proposed to sink all the theatres in England, for the benefit of the dolphins and the lobsters?"

He did not like these references to the theatre.

"It was only a piece of nonsense," said he, abruptly.

But then she begged him so prettily to get the men to sing



the boat-song for her that he good-humouredly took out a sheet of paper and a pencil and said to her—

"If I were to write it down for you, I must write it as it is pronounced. For how would you know that *Fhir a bhata, na horo eile* is pronounced *Feer a vahta na horo ailya?*"

"And perhaps, then," said she with a charming smile, "writing it down would spoil it altogether? But you will ask them to sing it for me?"

He said a word or two in the Gaelic to Duncan, who was rowing stroke; and Duncan answered with a short, quick laugh of assent.

"I have asked them if they would drink your health," Macleod said, "and they have not refused. It would be a great compliment to them if you would fill out the whisky yourself; here is my flask."

She took that formidable vessel in her small hands; and the men rested on their oars; and then the metal cup was passed along. Whether it was the dram, or whether it was the old familiar chorus they struck up—

"Fhir a bhata (na horo eile)
Fhir a bhata (na horo eile)
Fhir a bhata (na horo eile)
Chead soire slann leid ge thobh a theid u,"

certain it is that the boat swung forward with a new strength, and ere long they beheld in the distance the walls of Castle Dare. And here was Janet at the small quay, greatly distressed because of the discomfort to which Miss White must have been subjected.

"But I have just been telling Sir Keith," she said with a sweet smile, "that I have come through the most beautiful place I have ever seen in the world."

This was not, however, what she was saying to herself when she reached the privacy of her own room. Her thoughts took a different turn.

"And if it does seem impossible"—this was her inward speech to herself—"that those wild murders should have been committed in so beautiful a place, at least there will be a fair chance

of one occurring when I tell him that I have signed an engagement that will last till Christmas. But what good could come of being in a hurry?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

A CAVE IN MULL.

Of love not a single word had so far been said between these two. It was a high sense of courtesy that on his part had driven him to exercise this severe self-restraint; he would not invite her to be his guest, and then take advantage of the various opportunities offered to plague her with the vehemence and passionate yearning of his heart. For during all those long winter months he had gradually learned, from the correspondence which he so carefully studied, that she rather disliked protestation; and when he hinted that he thought her letters to him were somewhat cold, she only answered with a playful humour; and when he tried to press her to some declaration about her leaving the stage or about the time of their marriage, she evaded the point with an extreme cleverness which was so good-natured and friendly that he could scarcely complain. Occasionally there were references in these letters that awakened in his breast a tumult of jealous suspicions and fears; but then again he consoled himself by looking forward to the time when she should be released from all those environments that he hated and dreaded. He would have no more fear when he could take her hand and look into her eyes.

And now that Miss Gertrude White was actually in Castle Dare—now that he could walk with her along the lonely mountain-slopes and show her the wonders of the western seas and the islands—what was it that still occasioned that vague unrest? His nervous anxiety that she should be pleased with all she saw? Or a certain critical coldness in her glance? Or the consciousness that he was only entertaining a passing

visitor—a beautiful bird that had alighted on his hand, and that the next moment would be winging its flight away into the silvery south?

"You are becoming a capital sailor," he said to her one day, with a proud light on his face. "You have no fear at all of the sea now."

He and she and the cousin Janet—Mr. White had some letters to answer, and had stayed at home—were in the stern of the gig, and they were being rowed along the coast below the giant cliffs of Gribun. Certainly if Miss White had confessed to being a little nervous, she might have been excused. It was a beautiful, fresh, breezy, summer-day; but the heavy Atlantic swell that slowly raised and lowered the boat as the men rowed along, passed gently and smoothly on, and then went booming and roaring and crashing over the sharp black rocks that were quite close at hand.

"I think I would soon get over my fear of the sea," said she, gently

Indeed it was not that that was most likely to impress her on this bright day—it was the awful loneliness and desolation of the scene around her. All along the summit of the great cliffs lay heavy banks of cloud that moved and wreathed themselves together, with mysterious patches of darkness here and there that suggested the entrance into far valleys in the unseen mountains behind. And if the outer surface of these precipitous cliffs was brightened by sunlight, and if there was a sprinkling of grass on the ledges, every few minutes they passed the yawning archway of a huge cavern, around which the sea was roaring with a muffled and thunderous noise. He thought she would be interested in the extraordinary number and variety of the sea-birds about—the solemn cormorants sitting on the ledges, the rock-pigeons shooting out from the caves, the sea-pyots whirring along the rocks like lightning-flashes of colour, the lordly osprey, with his great wings outstretched and motionless, sailing slowly in the far blue overhead. And no doubt she looked at all these things with a forced interest; and she herself now could name the distant islands out in the tossing Atlantic; and she had in a great measure got accustomed to the amphibious life at Dare.

But as she listened to the booming of the waves around those awful recesses; and as she saw the jagged and angry rocks suddenly appear through the liquid mass of the falling sea; and as she looked abroad on the unknown distances of that troubled ocean and thought of the life on those remote and lonely islands, the spirit of a summer holiday forsook her altogether, and she was silent.

"And you will have no fear of the beast when you go into Mackinnon's cave," said Janet Macleod to her, with a friendly smile, "because no one has ever heard of it again. Do you know, it was a strange thing. They saw in the sand the footprint of an animal that is not known to any one about here; even Keith himself did not know what it was——"

"I think it was a wild cat," said he.

"And the men had nothing to do just then; so they went all about the caves, but they could see nothing of it. And it has never come back again."

"And I suppose you are not anxious for its coming back?" Miss White said.

"Perhaps you will be very lucky and see it some day, and I know that Keith would like to shoot it, whatever it is."

"That is very likely," Miss White said, without any apparent sarcasm.

By and by they paused opposite the entrance to a cave that seemed even larger and blacker than the others; and then Miss White discovered that they were considering at what point they could most easily effect a landing. Already through the singularly clear water she could make out vague green masses that told of the presence of huge blocks of yellow rock far below them; and as they cautiously went further towards the shore—a man at the bow calling out to them—these blocks of rock became clearer and clearer, until it seemed as if the glassy billows that glided under the boat, and then went crashing in white foam a few yards beyond, must inevitably transfix the frail craft on one of the jagged points. But at length they managed to run the bow of the gig into a somewhat sheltered place, and two of the men, jumping knee-deep into the water, hauled the keel still further over the grating shell-fish of the

visitor—a beautiful bird that had alighted on his hand, and that the next moment would be winging its flight away into the silvery south?

"You are becoming a capital sailor," he said to her one day, with a proud light on his face. "You have no fear at all of the sea now."

He and she and the cousin Janet—Mr. White had some letters to answer, and had stayed at home—were in the stern of the gig, and they were being rowed along the coast below the giant cliffs of Gribun. Certainly if Miss White had confessed to being a little nervous, she might have been excused. It was a beautiful, fresh, breezy, summer-day; but the heavy Atlantic swell that slowly raised and lowered the boat as the men rowed along, passed gently and smoothly on, and then went booming and roaring and crashing over the sharp black rocks that were quite close at hand.

"I think I would soon get over my fear of the sea," said she, gently

Indeed it was not that that was most likely to impress her on this bright day—it was the awful loneliness and desolation of the scene around her. All along the summit of the great cliffs lay heavy banks of cloud that moved and wreathed themselves together, with mysterious patches of darkness here and there that suggested the entrance into far valleys in the unseen mountains behind. And if the outer surface of these precipitous cliffs was brightened by sunlight, and if there was a sprinkling of grass on the ledges, every few minutes they passed the yawning archway of a huge cavern, around which the sea was roaring with a muffled and thunderous noise. He thought she would be interested in the extraordinary number and variety of the sea-birds about—the solemn cormorants sitting on the ledges, the rock-pigeons shooting out from the caves, the sea-pyots whirring along the rocks like lightning-flashes of colour, the lordly osprey, with his great wings outstretched and motionless, sailing slowly in the far blue overhead. And no doubt she looked at all these things with a forced interest; and she herself now could name the distant islands out in the tossing Atlantic; and she had in a great measure got accustomed to the amphibious life at Dare.

[illegible]

[illegible]

was [illegible]

"[illegible]

Mac[illegible]

smil[illegible]

know[illegible]

print [illegible]

even [illegible]

"I [illegible]

"And [illegible]

about [illegible]

never [illegible]

"And [illegible]

Miss W[illegible]

"Per[illegible]

know that [illegible]

"That [illegible]

sarcasm.

By and by [illegible]

seemed even [illegible]

White discovered [illegible]

could most easily [illegible]

singularly clear water [illegible]

that told of the presence of huge [illegible]

them; and as they cautiously went [illegible]

a man at the bow calling out to them [illegible]

became clearer and clearer, until [illegible]

billows that glided under the boat, and [illegible]

white foam a few yards beyond, must [illegible]

frail craft on one of the jagged points [illegible]

managed to run the bow of the gig into a [illegible] into the water,

place, and two of the men, jumping [illegible] of the

hauled the keel still further over the [illegible]

rock; and then Macleod, scrambling out, assisted Miss White to land.

"Do you not come with us?" Miss White called back to the boat.

"Oh, it is many a time I have been in the cave," said Janet Macleod; "and I will have the luncheon ready for you. But you must not stay long in the cave, for it is cold and damp."

He took her hand, for the scrambling over the rough rocks and stones was dangerous work for unfamiliar ankles. They drew nearer to this awful thing, that rose far above them, and seemed waiting to enclose them and shut them in for ever. And whereas about the other caves there were plenty of birds flying, with their shrill screams denoting their terror or resentment, there was no sign of life at all about this black and yawning chasm, and there was an absolute silence but for the rolling of the breakers behind them that only produced vague and wandering echoes. As she advanced over the treacherous shingle, she became conscious of a sort of twilight appearing around her. A vast black thing—black as night and still as the grave—was ahead of her; but already the change from the blaze of sunlight outside to this partial darkness seemed strange on the eyes. The air grew colder. As she looked up at the tremendous walls, and at the mysterious blackness beyond, she grasped his hand more tightly, though the walking on the wet sand was now comparatively easy. And as they went further and further into this blackness, there was only a faint strange light that made an outline of the back of his figure, leaning his face in darkness; and when he stooped to examine the sand, she turned and looked back, and behold, the vast portal by which they entered had now dwindled down into a small space of bewildering white.

"No," said he, and she was startled by the hollow tones of his voice, "I cannot find any traces of the beast now; they have all gone."

Then he produced a candle, and lit it; and as they advanced further into the blackness, there was only visible this solitary star of red fire, that threw dulled mysterious gleams from time to time on some projecting rock.

"You must give me your hand again, Keith," said she, in a

low voice; and when he shifted the candle, and took her hand in his, he found that it was trembling somewhat.

"Will you go any further?" said he.

"No."

They stood and looked around. The darkness seemed without limit; the red light was insufficient to produce anything like an outline of this immense place, even in faint and wandering gleams.

"If anything were to move, Keith," said she, "I should die."

"Oh, nonsense," said he, in a cheerful way; but the hollow echoes of the cavern made his voice sound sepulchral. "There is no beast at all in here, you may be sure. And I have often thought of the fright a wild cat or a beaver may have got when he came in here in the night, and then discovered he had stumbled on a lot of sleeping men——"

"Of men!"

"They say this was a sanctuary of the Culdees; and I often wonder how the old chaps got their food. I am afraid they must have often fallen back on the young cormorants; that is what Major Stewart calls an expeditious way of dining, for you eat two courses, fish and meat, at the same time. And if you go further along, Gertrude, you will come to the great altar-stone they used."

"I would rather not go," said she. "I—I do not like this place. I think we will go back now, Keith."

As they cautiously made their way back to the glare of the entrance, she still held his hand tight; and she did not speak at all. Their footsteps echoed strangely in this hollow space. And then the air grew suddenly warm; and there was a glow of daylight around; and although her eyes were rather bewildered, she breathed more freely, and there was a look of relief on her face.

"I think I will sit down for a moment, Keith," said she; and then he noticed, with a sudden alarm, that her cheeks were rather pale.

"Are you ill?" said he, with a quick anxiety in his eyes. "Were you frightened?"

"Oh, no!" said she, with a forced cheerfulness, and she sat

down for a moment on one of the smooth boulders. "You must not think I am such a coward as that. But—the chilling atmosphere—the change—made me a little faint."

"Shall I run down to the boat for some wine for you? I know that Janet has brought some claret."

"Oh, not at all!" said she—and he saw with a great delight that her colour was returning. "I am quite well now. But I will rest for a minute, if you are in no hurry, before scrambling down those stones again."

He was in no hurry; on the contrary, he sate down beside her and took her hand.

"You know, Gerty," said he, "it will be some time before I can learn all that you like and dislike, and what you can bear, and what pleases you best; it will be some time, no doubt; but then when I have learned, you will find that no one will look after you so carefully as I will."

"I know you are very kind to me," said she, in a low voice.

"And now," said he, very gently and even timidly, but his firm hand held her languid one with something of a more nervous clasp, "if you would only tell me, Gerty, that on such and such a day you would leave the stage altogether, and on such and such a day you would let me come to London—and you know the rest—then I would go to my mother, and there would be no need of any more secrecy; and instead of her treating you merely as a guest, she would look on you as her daughter, and you might talk with her frankly."

She did not at all withdraw the small gloved hand, with its fringe of fur at the end of the narrow sleeve. On the contrary, as it lay there in his warm grasp, it was like the small, white, furred foot of a ptarmigan, so little and soft and gentle was it.

"Well, you know, Keith," she said, with a great kindness in the clear eyes, though they were cast down, "I think the secret between you and me should be known to nobody at all but ourselves—any more than we can reasonably help. And it is a very great step to take; and you must not expect me to be in a hurry, for no good ever came of that. I did not think you would have cared so much—I mean, a man has so many distractions and occupations of shooting, and going away in your yacht, and

all that—I fancy—I am a little surprised—that you make so much of it. We have a great deal to learn yet, Keith; we don't know each other very well. By and by we may be quite sure that there is no danger; that we understand each other; that nothing and nobody is likely to interfere. But wouldn't you prefer to be left in the mean time just a little bit free—not quite pledged, you know, to such a serious thing——?"

He had been listening to these faltering phrases in a kind of dazed and pained stupor. It was like the water overwhelming a drowning man. But at last he cried out—and he grasped both her hands in the sudden vehemence of the moment—

"Gerty, you are not drawing back! You do not despair of our being husband and wife! What is it that you mean?"

"O Keith!" said she, quickly withdrawing one of her hands, "you frighten me when you talk like that. You do not know what you are doing—you have hurt my wrist."

"Oh, I hope not!" said he. "Have I hurt your hand, Gerty?—and I would cut off one of mine to save you a scratch! But you will tell me now that you have no fears—that you don't want to draw back! I would like to take you back to Dare, and be able to say to every one, 'Do you know that this is my wife—that by and by she is coming to Dare—and you will all be kind to her for her own sake and for mine.' And if there is anything wrong, Gerty—if there is anything you would like altered, I would have it altered. We have a rude way of life; but every one would be kind to you. And if the life here is too rough for you, I would go anywhere with you that you choose to live. I was looking at the houses in Essex. I would go to Essex—or anywhere you might wish—that need not separate us at all. And why are you so cold and distant, Gerty? Has anything happened here to displease you? Have we frightened you by too much of the boats and of the sea? Would you rather live in an English county away from the sea? But I would do that for you, Gerty—if I was never to see a sea-bird again."

And in spite of himself tears rose quickly to his eyes; for she seemed so far away from him, even as he held her hand; and his heart would speak at last—or break.

"It was all the winter months I was saying to myself, 'Now

you will not vex her with too much pleading, for she has mu trouble with her work; and that is enough; and a man can b his own trouble.' And once or twice, when we have been cau in a bad sea, I said to myself, 'And what matter now if the e comes?—for perhaps that would only release her.' But th again, Gerty, I thought of the time you gave me the red ro and I said 'Surely her heart will not go away from me; anc have plenty to live for yet!'"

Then she looked him frankly in the face, with those beautif clear, sad eyes.

"You deserve all the love a woman can give you, Keith; you have a man's heart. And I wish I could make you a f return for all your courage, and gentleness, and kindness——

"Ah, do not say that," he said, quickly. "Do not think I complaining of you, Gerty. It is enough—it is enough—I tha God for His mercy to me; for there never was any man so g as I was when you gave me the red rose. And now, swe heart—now you will tell me that I will put away all this trou and have no more fears; and there will be no need to think what you are doing far away; and there will be one day that the people will know—and there will be laughing and gladn that day—and if we will keep the pipes away from you, all t people about will have the pipes, and there will be a dance anc song that day. Ah, Gerty, you must not think harshly of t people about here. They have their ways. They would like please you. But my heart is with them; and a marriage-d would be no marriage-day to me that I did not spend among r own people—my own people."

He was talking quite wildly. She had seen him in this mo once or twice before; and she was afraid.

"But you know, Keith," said she, gently, and with avert eyes, "a great deal has to be done before then. And a woman is r so impulsive as a man; and you must not be angry if I beg f a little time——"

"And what is time?" said he, in the same glad and wi way—and now it was his hand holding hers that was tremblin "It will all go by in a moment—like a dream—when we know th the one splendid day is coming. And I will send a haunch

the Dubh-Artach men that morning; and I will send a haunch to Skerryvore; and there will not be a man in Iona, or Coll, or Ulva, that will not have his dram that day. And what will you do, Gerty—what will you do? Oh, I will tell you now what you will do on that morning. You will take out some sheets of the beautiful, small, scented paper; and you will write to this theatre and to that theatre: '*Good-bye—perhaps you were useful to me once, and I bear you no ill-will: but—Good-bye for ever and ever!*' And I will have all the children that I took to the Crystal Palace last summer given a fine dinner; and the six boy-pipers will play *Mrs. Macleod of Raasay* again; and they will have a fine reel once more. There will be many a one know that you are married that day, Gerty. And when is the day to be, Gerty? Cannot you tell me now?"

"There is a drop of rain!" she exclaimed; and she suddenly sprang to her feet. The skies were black overhead. "Oh, dear me," she said, "how thoughtless of us to leave your poor cousin Janet in that open boat, and a shower coming on! Please give me your hand now, Keith. And you must not take all these things so seriously to heart, you know; or I will say you have not the courage of a feeble woman like myself. Do you think the shower will pass over?"

"I do not know," said he, in a vague way, as if he had not quite understood the question; but he took her hand, and in silence guided her down to the rocks, where the boat was ready to receive them.

And now they saw the strange transformation that had come over the world. The great troubled sea was all of a dark slate-green, with no glad ripples of white, but with long squally drifts of black; and a cold wind was blowing gustily in; and there were hurrying clouds of a leaden hue tearing across the sky. As for the islands—where were they? Ulva was visible, to be sure, and Colonsay; both of them a heavy and gloomy purple; and nearer at hand the rock of Erisgeir showed in a wan grey light between the louring sky and the squally sea; but Lunga, and Fladda, and Staffa, and Iona, and even the long promontory of the Ross of Mull, were all hidden away behind the driving mists of rain.

"O you lazy people!" Janet Macleod cried cheerfully—sl was not at all frightened by the sudden storm. "I thought tl wild beast had killed you in the cave. And shall we ha luncheon now, Keith, or go back at once?"

He cast an eye towards the westward horizon, and the threa ening sky: Janet noticed at once that he was rather pale.

"We will have luncheon as they pull us back," said he, in a absent way, as if he was not quite sure of what was happenin around him.

He got her into the boat, and then followed. The men, n sorry to get away from these jagged rocks, took to their oa with a will. And then he sat silent and distraught, as the tw women, muffled up in their cloaks, chatted cheerfully, and pa took of the sandwiches and claret that Janet had got out of th basket. "*Fhir a bhata*" the men sang to themselves; and the passed under the great cliffs, all black and thunderous now; an the white surf was springing over the rocks. Macleod neithe ate nor drank; but sometimes he joined in the conversation in forced way; once or twice he laughed more loudly than th occasion seemed to demand.

"Oh yes," he said, "oh yes, you are becoming a good sailo now, Gertrude. You have no longer any fear of the water."

"You will become like little Johnny Wickes, Miss White, the cousin Janet said, "the little boy I showed you the othe day. He has got to be like a duck in his love for the wate And indeed I should have thought he would have got a frigh when Keith saved him from drowning; but no."

"Did you save him from being drowned?" she said, turnin to him. "And you did not tell me the story?"

"It was no story," said he. "He fell into the water; and w picked him up somehow;" and then he turned impatiently t the men, and said some words to them in the Gaelic, and ther was no more singing of the Farewell to the Boatman after that.

They got home to Castle Dare before the rain came on— though indeed it was but a passing shower, and it was succeede by a bright afternoon that deepened into a clear and brillian sunset; but as they went up through the moist-smelling larch wood—and as Janet happened to fall behind for a moment, t

speak to a herd-boy who was by the way-side—Macleod said to his companion—

"And have you no other word for me, Gertrude?"

Then she said, with a very gracious smile—

"You must be patient, Keith. Are we not very well off as we are?—I know a good many people who are not quite so well off. And I have no doubt we shall have courage to meet whatever good or bad fortune the days may bring us; and if it is good, then we shall shake hands over it, just as the village people do in an opera."

Fine phrases; though this man, with the dark and hopeless look in his eyes, did not seem to gain much gladness from them. And she forgot to tell him about that engagement which was to last till Christmas; perhaps if she had told him just then he would scarcely have heard her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE NEW TRAGEDY.

His generous large nature fought hard to find excuses for her. He strove to convince himself that this strange coldness, this evasion, this half-repellent attitude, was but a form of maiden coyness. It was her natural fear of so great a change. It was the result, perhaps, of some last lingering look back to the scene of her artistic triumphs. It did not even occur to him as a possibility that this woman, with her unstable sympathies and her fatally facile imagination, should have taken up what was now the very end and aim of his life, and have played with the pretty dream, until she grew tired of the toy and was ready to let her wandering fancy turn to something other and new.

He dared not even think of that; but all the same, as he stood at this open window, alone, an unknown fear had come over him. It was a fear altogether vague and undefined; but it

seemed to have the power of darkening the daylight around him. Here was the very picture he had so often desired that she should see—the wind-swept Atlantic; the glad blue skies with their drifting clouds of summer white; the Erisgeir rocks; the green shores of Ulva; and Colonsay, and Gometra, and Staffa all shining in the sunlight; with the sea-birds calling, and the waves breaking, and the soft west wind stirring the fuchsia-bushes below the windows of Castle Dare. And it was all dark now; and the sea was a lonely thing—more lonely than ever it had been even during that long winter that he had said was like a grave.

And she?—at this moment she was down at the small bridge that crossed the burn. She had gone out to seek her father; had found him coming up through the larch-wood; and was now accompanying him back. They had rested here; he sitting on the weather-worn parapet of the bridge; she leaning over it, and idly dropping bits of velvet-green moss into the whirl of clear brown water below.

"I suppose we must be thinking of getting away from Castle Dare, Gerty," said he.

"I shall not be sorry," she answered.

But even Mr. White was somewhat taken aback by the cool promptitude of this reply.

"Well, you know your own business best," he said to her. "It is not for me to interfere. I said from the beginning I would not interfere. But still—I wish you would be a little more explicit, Gerty, and let one understand what you mean—whether, in fact, you do mean, or do not mean, to marry Macleod?"

"And who said that I proposed not to marry him?" said she, but she still leant over the rough stones and looked at the water. "The first thing that would make me decline would be the driving me into a corner—the continual goading, and reminding me of the duty I had to perform. There has been just a little too much of that here"—and at this point she raised herself so that she could regard her father when she wished—"and I really must say that I do not like to be taking a holiday with the feeling hanging over you that certain things are expected of

you every other moment, and that you run the risk of being considered a very heartless and ungrateful person unless you do and say certain things you would perhaps rather not do and say. I should like to be let alone. I hate being goaded. And I certainly did not expect that you too, papa, would try to drive me into a corner."

She spoke with some little warmth. Mr. White smiled.

"I was quite unaware, Gerty," said he, "that you were suffering this fearful persecution."

"You may laugh, but it is true," said she, and there was a trifle of colour in her cheeks. "The serious interests I am supposed to be concerned about! Such profound topics of conversation! Will the steamer come by the south to-morrow, or round by the north? The Gometra men have had a good take of lobsters yesterday. Will the head-man at the Something lighthouse be transferred to some other lighthouse; and how will his wife and family like the change? They are doing very well with the subscription for a bell for the Free Church at Iona. The deer have been down at John Maclean's barley again. Would I like to visit the weaver at Iona who has such a wonderful turn for mathematics; and would I like to know the man at Salen who has the biographies of all the great men of the time in his head?"

Miss White had worked herself up to a pretty pitch of contemptuous indignation; her father was almost beginning to believe that it was real.

"It is all very well for the Macleods to interest themselves with these trumpery little local matters. They play the part of grand patron; the people are proud to honour them; it is a condescension when they remember the name of the crofter's youngest boy. But as for me—when I am taken about—well, I do not like being stared at as if they thought I was wearing too fine clothes. I don't like being continually placed in a position of inferiority through my ignorance—an old fool of a boatman saying 'Bless me!' when I have to admit that I don't know the difference between luggers and smacks. I don't want to know. I don't want to be continually told. I wish these people would meet me on my own ground. I wish the Macleods would begin to

talk after dinner about the Lord Chamberlain's interference with the politics of burlesques; and then perhaps they would not be so glib. I am tired of hearing about John Maclean's boat; and Donald Maclean's horse; and Sandy Maclean's refusal to pay the road-tax. And as for the drinking of whisky that these sailors get through—well, it seems to me that the ordinary condition of things is reversed here altogether; and if they ever put up an asylum in Mull, it will be a lunatic asylum for incurable abstainers."

"Now, now, Gerty," said her father—but all the same he rather liked to see his daughter get on her high horse, for she talked with spirit, and it amused him—"you must remember that Macleod looks on this as a holiday-time, and perhaps he may be a little lax in his regulations. I have no doubt it is because he is so proud to have you on board his yacht that he occasionally gives the men an extra glass—and I am sure it does them no harm, for they seem to me to be as much in the water as out of it."

She paid no heed to this protest. She was determined to give free speech to her sense of wrong, and humiliation, and disappointment.

"What has been the great event since ever we came here—the wildest excitement the island can afford?" she said. "The arrival of the pedlar! A snuffy old man comes into the room, with a huge bundle wrapped up in dirty waterproof. Then there is a wild clatter of Gaelic. But suddenly, don't you know, there are one or two glances at me; and the Gaelic stops; and Duncan, or John, or whatever they call him, begins to stammer in English, and I am shown coarse stockings, and bundles of wool, and drugget petticoats, and cotton handkerchiefs. And then Miss Macleod buys a number of things which I know she does not want; and I am looked on as a strange creature because I do not purchase a bundle of wool or a pair of stockings fit for a farmer. The Autolycus of Mull is not impressive, papa. Oh, but I forgot the dramatic surprise—that also was to be an event I have no douht. I was suddenly introduced to a child dressed in a kilt; and I was to speak to him; and I suppose I was to be profoundly moved when I heard him speak to me in my own

tongue in this out-of-the-world place. My own tongue! The horrid little wretch has not an *h*."

"Well, there's no pleasing you, Gerty," said he.

"I don't want to be pleased; I want to be let alone," said she.

But she said this with just a little too much sharpness; for her father was, after all, a human being; and it did seem to be too bad that he should be taunted in this fashion, when he had done his best to preserve a wholly neutral attitude.

"Let me tell you this, madam," said he, in a playful manner, but with some decision in his tone, "that you may live to have the pride taken out of you. You have had a good deal of flattery and spoiling; and you may find out you have been expecting too much. As for these Macleods here, I will say this — although I came here very much against my own inclination—that I defy any one to have been more kind, and courteous, and attentive than they have been to you. I don't care. It is not my business, as I tell you. But I must say, Gerty, that when you make a string of complaints as the only return for all their hospitality—their excessive and almost burdensome hospitality—I think that even I am bound to say a word. You forget how you come here. You, a perfect stranger, come here as engaged to marry the old lady's only son—to dispossess her—very probably to make impossible a match that she had set her heart on. And both she and her niece—you understand what I mean—instead of being cold, or at least formal, to you, seem to me to think of nothing from morning till night but how to surround you with kindness, in a way that Englishwomen would never think of. And this you call persecution; and you are vexed with them because they won't talk to you about theatres—why, bless my soul, how long is it since you were yourself talking about theatres as if the very word choked you!——"

"Well, at least, papa, I never thought you would turn against me," said she, as she put her head partly aside, and made a mouth as if she were about to cry; "and when mamma made you promise to look after Carry and me, I am sure she never thought——"

Now this was too much for Mr. White. In the small ey behind those big gold spectacles there was a quick flash fire.

"Don't be a fool, Gerty," said he, in downright ange "You know it is no use your trying to humbug me. If yo think the ways of this house are too poor and mean for you grand notions of state; if you think he has not enough mone and you are not likely to have fine dinners and entertainmen for your friends; if you are determined to break off the match- why, then, do it!—but, I tell you, don't try to humbug me!"

Miss White's pathetic attitude suddenly vanished. She dre herself up with much dignity and composure, and said—

"At all events, sir, I have been taught my duty to you; ar I think it better not to answer you."

With that she moved off towards the house; and Mr. Whit taking to whistling, began to do as she had been doing—id throwing bits of moss into the rushing burn. After all, it w none of his business.

But that evening, some little time before dinner, it w proposed they should go for a stroll down to the shore; ar then it was that Miss White thought she would seize tl occasion to let Macleod know of her arrangements for tl coming autumn and winter. Ordinarily, on such excursions, sl managed to walk with Janet Macleod—the old lady of Cast Dare seldom joined them—leaving Macleod to follow with h father; but this time she so managed it that Macleod and sl left the house together. Was he greatly overjoyed? There w a constrained and anxious look on his face that had been the too much of late.

"I suppose Oscar is more at home here than in Bury Stre St. James's?" said she, as the handsome collie went down tl path before them.

"No doubt," said he, absently: he was not thinking of ar collie.

"What beautiful weather we are having," said she, to th silent companion. "It is always changing, but always beautif There is only one other aspect I should like to see—the sno time."



AN EVENING WALK.

"We have not much snow here," said he. "It seldom lies in the winter."

This was a strange conversation, for two engaged lovers: it was not much more interesting than their talk—how many ages ago?—at Charing Cross station. But then, when she had said to him, "*Ought we to take tickets?*" she had looked into his face, with those appealing, innocent, beautiful eyes. Now her eyes never met his. She was afraid.

She managed to lead up to her announcement skilfully enough. By the time they reached the shore an extraordinarily beautiful sunset was shining over the sea and the land—something so bewildering and wonderful that they all four stopped to look at it. The Atlantic was a broad expanse of the palest and most brilliant green, with the pathway of the sun a flashing line of gold coming right across until it met the rocks, and these were a jet black against the glow. Then the distant islands of Colonsay, and Staffa, and Lunga, and Fladda, lying on this shining green sea, appeared to be of a perfectly transparent bronze; while nearer at hand the long ranges of cliffs were becoming a pale rose-red under the darkening blue-grey sky. It was a blaze of colour such as she had never even dreamed of as being possible in nature; nothing she had as yet seen in these northern latitudes had at all approached it. And as she stood there, and looked at those transparent islands of bronze on the green sea, she said to him—

"Do you know, Keith, this is not at all like the place I had imagined as the scene of the gloomy stories you used to tell me about the revenges of the clans. I have been frightened once or twice since I came here, no doubt—by the wild sea and the darkness of the cathedral, and so forth; but the longer I stay the less I see to suggest those awful stories. How could you associate such an evening as this with a frightful tragedy? Do you think those people ever existed who were supposed to have suffocated, or slaughtered, or starved to death any one who opposed their wishes?"

"And I do not suppose they troubled themselves much about fine sunsets," said he. "That was not what they had to think about in those days."

"Perhaps not," said she, lightly; "but, you know, I had expected to find a place from which I could gain some inspiration for tragedy—for I should like to try, once for all—if I *should* have to give up the stage—whether I had the stuff of a tragic actress in me. And, you know, in that case, I ought to dress in black velvet; and carry a taper through dungeons; and get accustomed to storms, and gloom, and thunder and lightning."

"We have no appliances here for the education of an actress—I am very sorry," said he.

"Now, Keith, that is hardly fair," said she, with a smile. "You know it is only a trial. And you saw what they said of my *Juliet*. Oh, did I tell you about the new tragedy that is coming out?"

"No, I do not think you did," said he.

"Ah, well, it is a great secret as yet; but there is no reason why you should not hear of it."

"I am not anxious to hear of it," said he, without any rudeness.

"But it concerns me," she said, "and so I must tell you. It is written by a brother of Mr. Lemuel, the artist I have often spoken to you about. He is by profession an architect; but if this play should turn out to be as fine as some people say it is, he ought to take to dramatic writing. In fact all the Lemuels—there are three brothers of them, you know—are like Michael Angelo and Leonardo—artists to the finger-tips, in every direction—poets, painters, sculptors, and all the rest of it. And I do think I ought to feel flattered by their choice in asking me to play the heroine; for so much depends on the choice of the actress——"

"And you are still to act?" said he, quickly, though he spoke in a low voice, so that those behind should not hear.

"Surely I explained to you?" said she, in a pleasant manner. "After all, life-long habits are not so easily cast aside; and I knew you would be generous, and bear with me a little bit, Keith."

He turned to her. The glow of the sunset caught his face. There was a strange, hopeless sadness in his eyes.



"Generous to you?" said he. "You know I would give you

my life if that would serve you. But this is worse than taking my life from me."

"Keith, Keith!" said she, in gentle protest, "I don't know what you mean. You should not take things so seriously. What is it after all? It was as an actress that you knew me first. What is the difference of a few months more or less? If I had not been an actress, you would never have known me—do you recollect that? By the way, has Major Stewart's wife got a piano?"

He turned and stared at her for a second, in a bewildered way.

"Oh yes," said he, with a laugh, "Mrs. Stewart has got a piano. She has got a very good piano. And what is the song you would sing now, sweetheart? Shall we finish up and have done with it, with a song at the end? That is the way in the theatre, you know—a dance and a song as the people go. And what shall our song be now? There was one that Norman Ogilvie used to sing."

"I don't know why you should talk to me like that, Keith," said she, though she seemed somewhat frightened by this fierce gaiety. "I was going to tell you that, if Mrs. Stewart had a piano, I would very gladly sing one or two songs for your mother and Miss Macleod when we went over there to-morrow. You have frequently asked me. Indeed I have brought with me the very songs I sang to you the first time I saw you—at Mrs. Ross's."

Instantly his memory flew back to that day—to the hushed little room over the sunlit gardens—to the beautiful, gentle, sensitive girl who seemed to have so strange an interest in the Highlands—to the wonderful thrill that went through him when she began to sing with an exquisite pathos "A wee bird cam' to our ha' door"—and to the prouder enthusiasm that stirred him when she sang "I'll to Lochiel, and Appin, and kneel to them!" These were fine, and tender, and proud songs. There was no gloom about them—nothing about a grave and the dark winter-time, and a faithless lost love. This song of Norman Ogilvie's that he had gaily proposed they should sing now? What had Major Stewart, or his wife, or any one in Mull to do with "Death's black wine"?

"I meant to tell you, Keith," said she, somewhat nervously, "that I had signed an engagement to remain at the Piccadilly Theatre till Christmas next. I knew you wouldn't mind—I mean, you would be considerate, and you would understand how difficult it is for one to break away all at once from one's old associations. And then, you know, Keith," said she, shyly, "though you may not like the theatre, you ought to be proud of my success, as even my friends and acquaintances are. And as they are all anxious to see me make another appearance in tragedy, I really should like to try it; so that when my portrait appears in the Academy next year, people may not be saying, 'Look at the impertinence of that girl appearing as a tragic actress when she can do nothing beyond the familiar modern comedy!' I should have told you all about it before, Keith, but I know you hate to hear any talk about the theatre; and I sha'n't bore you again, you may depend on that. Isn't it time to go back now? See! the rose-colour is away from Ulva now; it is quite a dark purple."

He turned in silence and led the way back. Behind them he could faintly hear Mr. White discoursing to Janet Macleod about the manner in which the old artists mixed their own pigments.

Then Macleod said with a great gentleness and restraint,—

"And when you go away from here, Gertrude, I suppose I must say good-bye to you; and no one knows when we shall see each other again. You are returning to the theatre. If that is your wish, I would not try to thwart it. You know best what is the highest prize the world can give you. And how can I warn you against failure and disappointment? I know you will be successful. I know the people will applaud you, and your head will be filled with their praises. You are going forward to a new triumph, Gerty; and the first step you will take—will my be on my heart."



CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN UNDERSTANDING.

"PAPA dear," said Miss White to her father, in a playful way, although it was a serious sort of playfulness, "I have a vague feeling that there is a little too much electricity in the atmosphere of this place just at present. I am afraid there may be an explosion; and you know my nerves can't stand much of a shock. I should be glad to get away."

By this time she had quite made up that little difference with her father—she did not choose to be left alone at a somewhat awkward crisis. She had told him she was sure he had not meant what he said about her; and she had expressed her sorrow for having provoked him; and there an end. And if Mr. White had been driven by his anger to be for the moment the ally of Macleod, he was not disinclined to take the other side now and let Miss White have her own will. The vast amount of training he had bestowed on her through many long years was not to be thrown away after all.

"I told him last night," said she, "of my having signed an engagement till Christmas next."

"Oh, indeed," said her father, quickly looking at her over his spectacles.

"Yes," said she, thoughtfully, "and he was not so disturbed or angry as I had expected. Not at all. He was very kind about it. But I don't understand him."

"What do you not understand?"

"He has grown so strange of late—so sombre. Once, you know, he was the lightest-hearted young man—enjoying every minute of his life, you know—and really, papa, I think——"

And here Miss White stopped.

"At all events," said she, quickly, "I want to be in a less dangerously excited atmosphere, where I can sit down and consider matters calmly. It was much better when he and I corresponded; then we could fairly learn what each other

thought. Now I am almost afraid of him—I mean I am afraid to ask him a question. I have to keep out of his way. And if it comes to that, papa, you know, I feel now as if I was called on to act a part from morning till night, whereas I was always assured that if I left the stage and married him it was to be my natural self and I should have no more need to pose and sham. However, that is an old quarrel between you and me, and we will put it aside. What's more to the purpose is this—it was half understood that when we left Castle Dare he was to come with us through at least a part of the Highlands."

"There was a talk of it."

"Don't you think," said Miss White, with some little hesitation, and with her eyes cast down, "don't you think that would be—a little inconvenient—?"

"I should say that was for you to decide," he answered, somewhat coldly; for it was too bad that she should be continually asking his advice and then openly disregarding it.

"I should think it would be a little uncomfortable," she said, demurely. "I fancy he has taken that engagement till Christmas a little more to heart than he chooses to reveal—that is natural—I knew it would be a disappointment—but then, you know, papa, the temptation was very great, and I had almost promised the Lemuels to do what I could for the piece. And if I am to give up the stage, wouldn't it be fine to wind up with a blaze of fireworks to astonish the public?"

"Are you so certain you will astonish the public?" her father said.

"I have the courage to try," she answered, readily. "And you are not going to throw cold water on my endeavours, are you, papa? Well, as I was saying, it is perhaps natural for Sir Keith to feel a bit annoyed; and I am afraid if he went travelling with us, we should be continually skating on the edge of a quarrel. Besides, to tell you the truth, papa—with all his kindness and gentleness, there is sometimes about him a sort of intensity that I scarcely like—it makes me afraid him. If it were on the stage, I should say it was a splendid piece of acting—of the suppressed vehement kind, you know; but really—during a holiday-time, when one naturally wishes to enjoy the fine weather and gather

strength for one's work—well, I do think he ought not to come with us, papa."

"Very well, you can hint as much without being rude."

"I was thinking," said she, "of the Mr. and Mrs. Bald who were in that Newcastle company, and who went to Aberdeen. Do you remember them, papa?"

"The low comedian, you mean?"

"Yes. Well, at all events they would be glad to see us. And so—don't you think—we could let Macleod understand that we were going to see some friends in the north? Then he would not think of coming with us."

"The representation would scarcely be justifiable," observed Mr. White, with a profound air, "in ordinary circumstances. But, as you say, it would be neither for his comfort nor for yours that he should go with us."

"Comfort!" she exclaimed. "Much comfort I have had since I came here! Comfort I call quiet, and being let alone. Another fortnight at this place would give me brain-fever—your life continually in danger either on the sea or by the cliffs—your feelings supposed to be always up at passion pitch—it is all a whirl of secret or declared emotions that don't give you a moment's rest. Oh, papa, won't it be nice to have a day or two's quiet in our own home, with Carry and Marie! And you know Mr. Lemuel will be in town all the summer and winter. The material for *his* work he finds within himself. He dosen't need to scamper off like the rest of them to hunt out picturesque peasants and studies of waterfalls—trotting about the country with a note-book in hand——"

"Gerty, Gerty," said her father with a smile, "your notions are unformed on that subject. What have I told you often—that the artist is only a reporter. Whether he uses the pencil, or the pen, or his own face and voice to express the highest thoughts and emotions of which he is conscious, he is only a reporter—a penny-a-liner whose words are written in fire. And you—don't you carry your note-book too?"

"I was not comparing myself with an artist like Mr. Lemuel, papa. No, no. Of course I have to keep my eyes open, and pick up things that may be useful. His

work is the work of intense spiritual contemplation — it is inspiration——"

"No doubt," the father said, "the inspiration of Botticelli."

"Papa!"

Mr. White chuckled to himself. He was not given to joking: an epigram was not in consonance with his high sententiousness. But instantly he resumed his solemn deportment.

"A picture is as much a part of the world as a human face: why should I not take my inspiration from a picture as well as from a human face?"

"You mean to say he is only a copyist—a plagiarist!" she said, with some indignation.

"Not at all," said he. "All artists have their methods founded more or less on the methods of those who have gone before them. You don't expect an artist to discover for himself an entirely new principle of art, any more than you expect him to paint in pigments of his own invention. Mr. Lemuel has been a diligent student of Botticelli—that is all."

This strange talk amid the awful loneliness and grandeur of Glen Sloich! They were idly walking along the rough road: far above them rose the giant slopes of the mountains retreating into heavy masses of clouds that were moved by the currents of the morning wind. It was a grey day; and the fresh-water lake here was of a leaden hue; and the browns and greens of the mountain-side were dark and intense. There was no sign of human life or habitation; there was no bird singing; the deer were far away in the unknown valleys above them, hidden by the mystic cloud-phantoms. There was an odour of sweet-gale in the air. The only sound was the murmuring of the streams that were pouring down through these vast solitudes to the sea.

And now they reached a spot from whence, on turning, they caught sight of the broad plain of the Atlantic—all wind-swept and white. And the sky was dark and low down; though at one place the clouds had parted, and there was a glimmer of blue as narrow and keen as the edge of a knife. But there were showers about; for Iona was invisible, and Staffa was faintly grey through the passing rain; and Ulva was almost black as

the storm approached in its gloom. Botticelli! Those men now in that small lug-sailed boat—far away off the point of Gometra—a tiny dark thing apparently lost every second or so amid the white Atlantic surge—and wrestling hard with the driving wind and sea to reach the thundering and foam-filled caverns of Staffa—they were not thinking much of Botticelli. Keith Macleod was in that boat. The evening before Miss White had expressed some light wish about some trifle or other; but had laughingly said that she must wait till she got back to the region of shops. Unknown to her, Macleod had set off to intercept the steamer: and he would go on board and get hold of the steward; and would the steward be so kind as to hunt about in Oban to see if that trifle could not be found? Macleod would not intrust so important a message to any one else: he would himself go out to meet the *Pioneer*.

"The sky is becoming very dark," Mr. White said; "we had better go back, Gerty."

But before they had gone far, the first heavy drops were beginning to fall, and they were glad to run for refuge to some great grey boulders which lay in the moist moorland at the foot of the mountain-slopes. In the lee of these rocks they were in comparative safety; and they waited patiently until the gale of wind and rain should pass over. And what were these strange objects that appeared in the grey mists far along the valley? She touched her father's arm—she did not speak; it was her first sight of a herd of red-deer, and as the deer had doubtless been startled by a shepherd or his dog, they were making across the glen at a good speed. First came the hinds, running almost in Indian file, and with a longer stride came one or two stags, their antlered heads high in the air, as though they were listening for sounds behind them and sniffing the wind in front of them at the same time. But so far away were they that they were only blurred objects passing through the rain-mists; they passed across like swift ghosts; there was no sound heard at all. And then the rain ceased, and the air grew warm around them. They came out from the shadow of the rock—behold! a blaze of hot sun on the moist moors, with a sudden odour of bracken, and young heather, and sweet-gale all about them. And the

sandy road quickly grew dry again; and the heavens opened; and there was a flood of sunlight falling on that rushing and breezy Atlantic. They walked back to Dare.

"Tuesday, then, shall we say, papa?" she remarked, just before entering.

"Very well."

"And we are going to see some friends in Aberdeen."

"Very well."

After this Miss White became a great deal more cheerful; and she was very complaisant to them all at luncheon. And quite by accident she asked Macleod, who had returned by this time, whether they talked Scotch in Aberdeen.

"Because, you know," said she, "one should always be learning on one's travels; and many a time I have heard people disputing about the pronunciation of the Scotch; and one ought to be able to read Burns with a proper accent. Now you have no Scotch at all here; you don't say 'my dawtie,' and 'ben the hoose,' and 'twixt the gloaming and the mirk.'

"Oh no," said he, "we have none of the Scotch at all, except among those who have been for a time to Glasgow or Greenock; and our own language, the Gaelic, is unknown to strangers; and our way of speaking English—that is only made a thing to laugh at. And yet I do not laugh at all at the blunders of our poor people in a strange tongue. You may laugh at our poor people for their way of speaking English—the accent of it and their mistakes; but then other people sometimes make mistakes too in a strange tongue. Did you ever hear of the poor Highlander who was asked how he had been employing himself, and, after a long time, he said, "I wass for tree years a herring-fish, and I wass for four months or tree months a broke stone on the road?' Perhaps the Highlanders are not very clever at picking up another language; but all the same that did not prevent their going to all parts of the world and fighting the battles of other people. And do you know that in Canada there are descendants of the Highlanders who went there in the last century—and they are proud of their name and their history—and they have swords that were used at Prestonpans and Culloden—but these Macnabs, and Mackays, and MacNeils they speak only

French! But I think, if they have Highland blood in them, and if they were to hear the '*Fàilte Phrionnsa*' played on the pipes, they would recognize that language. And why were you asking about Aberdeen?"

"That is not a Highland, but a Scotch way of answering my question," said she, smiling.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said he, hastily, "but indeed I have never been to Aberdeen, and I do not know what it is they speak there, but I should say it was likely to be a mixture of Scotch and English such as all the big towns have. I do not think it is a Highland place like Inverness."

"Now I will answer your question," said she. "I asked you because papa and I propose to go there before returning to England——."

How quickly the light fell from his face!

"——the fact is, we have some friends there."

There was silence. They all felt that it was for Macleod to speak; and they may have been guessing as to what was passing in his mind. But to their surprise he said, in almost a gay fashion—

"Ah, well, you know they accuse us Highland folk of being rather too importunate as hosts; but we will try not to harass you; and if you have friends in Aberdeen, it would not be fair to beg of you to leave them aside this time. But surely you are not thinking of going to Aberdeen yet, when there is many a place you have yet to see about here. I was to take you in the *Umpire* to Skye; and we had many a talk about the Lewis too."

"Thank you very much," said she demurely. "I am sure you have been most kind to us; but—the fact is—I think we must leave on Tuesday."

"On Tuesday!" said he; but it was only for an instant that he winced. Again he roused himself—for he was talking in the presence of his mother and the cousin Janet—"You have not been quite fair to us," said he, cheerfully; "you have not given yourself time to make our acquaintance. Are you determined to go away as you came, the Fionaghal? But then, you know, Fionaghal came and stayed among us, before she began to write

her songs about the western isles; and the next time you come, that must be for a longer time, and you will get to know us all better, and we will not frighten you any more by taking you on the sea at night or into the cathedral ruins. Ah!" said he, with a smile lighting up his face—but it was a constrained gaiety altogether. "Do I know now why you are hurrying away so soon? You want to avoid that trip in the *Umpire* to the island where I used to think I would like my grave to be——"

"Keith!" said Lady Macleod with a frown. "How can you repeat that nonsense! Miss White will think you are mad!"

"It was only an old fancy, mother," said he, gently. "And we were thinking of going out to one of the Treshnish islands, anyway. Surely it is a harmless thing that a man should choose out the place of his own grave, so long as he does not want to be put into it too soon."

"It will be time for you to speak of such things thirty years hence," said Lady Macleod.

"Thirty years is a long time," said he; and then he added, lightly, "but if we do not go out to the Treshnish islands we must go somewhere else before the Tuesday; and would you go round to Loch Sunart now; or shall we drive you to-morrow to see Glen More and Carsaig? Then you must not leave Mull without visiting our beautiful town—and capital—that is Tobermory."

Every one was quite surprised and pleased to find Macleod taking the sudden departure of his sweetheart in this fashion; it showed that he had abundant confidence in the future. And if Miss White had her own thoughts about the matter, it was at all events satisfactory to her that outwardly Macleod and she were parting on good terms.

But that evening he happened to find her alone for a few moments; and all the constrained cheerfulness had left his eyes, and there was a dark look there—of hopeless anxiety and pain.

"I do not wish to force you, Gerty—to persecute you," said he. "You are our guest. But before you go away cannot you give me one definite word of promise and hope—only one word?"

"I am quite sure you don't want to persecute me, Keith," said

she, "but you should remember there is a long time of waiting before us, and there will be plenty of opportunity for explaining and arranging everything when we have leisure to write——"

"To write!" he exclaimed. "But I am coming to see you, Gerty! Do you think I could go through another series of long months, with only those letters, and letters, and letters, to break one's heart over? I could not do it again, Gerty. And when you have visited your friends in Aberdeen, I am coming to London."

"Why, Keith, there is the shooting!"

"I do not think I shall try the shooting this year—it is an anxiety—I cannot have patience with it. I am coming to London, Gerty."

"Oh, very well, Keith," said she, with an affectation of cheerful content; "then there is no use in our taking a solemn good-bye just now,—is there? You know how I hate scenes. And we shall part very good friends, shall we not? And when you come to London, we shall make up all our little differences, and have everything on a clear understanding. Is it a bargain? Here comes your cousin Janet—now show her that we are good friends, Keith! And for goodness' sake don't say that you mean to give up your shooting this year, or she will wonder what I have made of you. Give up your shooting! Why, a woman would as soon give up her right of being incomprehensible and whimsical and capricious—her right of teasing people, as I very much fear I have been teasing you, Keith. But it will be all set right when you come to London."

And from that moment to the moment of her departure, Miss White seemed to breathe more freely, and she took less care to avoid Keith Macleod in her daily walks and ways. There was at last quite a good understanding between them, as the people around imagined.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AFRAID.

But the very first thing she did on reaching home again was to write to Macleod begging him to postpone his visit to London. What was the use? The company of which she formed a part was most probably going on an autumn tour; she was personally very busy. Surely it would not much interest him to be present at the production of a new piece in Liverpool?

And then she pointed out to him that, as she had her duties and occupations, so ought he to have. It was monstrous his thought of foregoing the shooting that year. Why, if he wanted some additional motive, what did he say to preserving as much grouse-plumage as would trim a cloak for her? It was a great pity that the skins of so a beautiful bird should be thrown away. And she desired him to present her kind regards to Lady Macleod and to Miss Macleod; and to thank them both for their great kindness.

Immediately after writing that letter, Miss White seemed to grow very light-hearted indeed, and she laughed and chatted with Carry, and was exceedingly affectionate towards her sister.

"And what do you think of your own home now, Gerty?" said Miss Carry, who had been making some small experiments in arrangement.

"You mean, after my being among the savages?" said she. "Ah, it is too true, Carry. I have seen them in their war-paint; and I have shuddered at their spears; and I have made voyages in their canoes. But it is worth while going anywhere and doing anything in order to come back and experience such a sense of relief and quiet. Oh, what a delicious cushion!—where did you get it, Carry?"

She sank back in the rocking-chair out on this shaded verandah. It was the slumbering noontide of a July day; the foliage above and about the Regent's Canal hung motionless in the still sunlight; and there was a perfume of roses in the air.

Here, at last, was repose. She had said that her notion of happiness was to be let alone; and—now that she had despatched that forbidding letter—she would be able to enjoy a quiet and languor free from care.

"Aha, Gerty, don't you know?" said the younger sister. "Well, I suppose, you poor creature, you don't know—you have been among the tigers and crocodiles so long. That cushion is a present from Mr. Lemuel to me—to me, mind, not to you—and he brought it all the way from Damascus some years ago. Oh, Gerty, if I was only three years older, shouldn't I like to be your rival, and have a fight with you for him!"

"I don't know what you mean!" said the elder sister, sharply.

"Oh, don't you! Poor, innocent thing! Well, I am not going to quarrel with you this time—for at last you are showing some sense. How you ever could have thought of Mr. Howson, or Mr. Brook, or—you know whom—I never could imagine; but here is some one now whom people have heard of—some one with fame like yourself—who will understand you. Oh, Gerty, hasn't he lovely eyes?"

"Like a gazelle," said the other. "You know what Mr. —— said—that he never met the appealing look of Mr. Lemuel's eyes without feeling in his pockets for a biscuit."

"He wouldn't say anything like that about you, Gerty," Carry said, reproachfully.

"Who wouldn't?"

"Mr. Lemuel."

"Oh, Carry, don't you understand that I am so glad to be allowed to talk nonsense? I have been all strung up, lately, like the string of a violin. Everthing *au grand sérieux*. I want to be idle, and to chat, and to talk nonsense. Where did you get that bunch of stephanotis?"

"Mr. Lemuel brought it last evening. He knew you were coming home to-day. Oh, Gerty, do you know I have seen your portrait, though it isn't finished yet; and you look—you look like an inspired prophetess. I never saw anything so lovely!"

"Indeed," said Miss White, with a smile; but she was pleased.

"When the public see that, they will know what you are

really like, Gerty,—instead of buying your photograph in a shop from a collection of ballet-dancers and circus-women. That is where you ought to be—in the Royal Academy: not in a shop window with any mountebank. Oh, Gerty, do you know who is your latest rival in the stationers' windows? The woman who dresses herself as a mermaid and swims in a transparent tank, below water. Fin-fin they call her. I suppose you have not been reading the newspapers?"

"Not much."

"There is a fine collection for you up-stairs. And there is an article about you, in the *Islington Young Men's Improvement Association Journal.* It is signed *Trismegistus.* Oh, it is beautiful, Gerty—quite full of poetry! It says you are an enchantress striking the rockiest heart, and a well of pure emotion springs up. It says you have the beauty of Mrs. Siddons and the genius of Rachel."

"Dear me!"

"Ah, you don't half believe in yourself, Gerty," said the younger sister, with a critical air. "It is the weak point about you. You depreciate yourself, and you make light of other people's belief in you. However, you can't go against your own genius. That is too strong for you. As soon as you get on the stage, then you forget to laugh at yourself."

"Really, Carry, has papa been giving you a lecture about me?"

"Oh, laugh away; but you know it is true. And a woman like you—you were going to throw yourself away on a——"

"Carry! There are some things that are better not talked about," said Gertrude White, curtly, as she rose and went indoors.

Miss White betook herself to her professional and domestic duties with much alacrity and content, for she believed that by her skill as a letter-writer she could easily ward off the importunities of her too passionate lover. It is true that at times, and in despite of her playful evasion, she was visited by a strange dread. However far away, the cry of a strong man in his agony has something terrible in it. And what was this he wrote to her in simple and calm words?—

"Are our paths diverging, Gerty? and, if that is so, what will be the end of it for me and for you? Are you going away from me? After all that has passed, are we to be separated in the future, and you will go one way, and I must go the other way, with all the world between us, so that I shall never see you again? Why will you not speak? You hint of lingering doubts and hesitations. Why have you not the courage to be true to yourself—to be true to your woman's heart—to take your life in your own hands and shape it so that it shall be worthy of you?"

Well, she did speak, in answer to this piteous prayer. She was a skilful letter-writer.

"It may seem very ungrateful in an actress, you know, dear Keith, to contest the truth of anything said by Shakespere; but I don't think, with all humility, there ever was so much nonsense put into so small a space as there is in these lines that everybody quotes at your head—

'To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.'

'Be true to yourself,' people say to you. But surely every one who is conscious of failings, and deceitfulness, and unworthy instincts, would rather try to be a little better than himself? Where else would there be any improvement, in an individual, or in society? You have to fight against yourself, instead of blindly yielding to your wish of the moment. I know I, for one, should not like to trust myself. I wish to be better than I am—to be other than I am—and I naturally look around for help and guidance. Then you find people recommending you absolutely diverse ways of life, and with all show of authority and reason, too; and in such an important matter ought not one to consider carefully before making a final choice?"

Miss White's studies in mental and moral science, as will readily be perceived, had not been of a profound character. But he did not stay to detect the obvious fallacy of her argument. It was all a maze of words to him. The drowning man does not hear questions addressed to him. He only knows

that the waters are closing over him—and that there is no arm stretched out to save.

"I do not know myself for two minutes together," she wrote. "What is my present mood, for example? Why, one of absolute and ungovernable hatred, hatred of the woman who would take my place if I were to retire from the stage. I have been thinking of it all the morning—picturing myself as an unknown nonentity, vanished from the eyes of the public, in a social grave. And I have to listen to people praising the new actress; and I have to read columns about her in the papers; and I am unable to say, 'Why all that and more was written and said about me!' What has an actress to show for herself if once she leaves the stage? People forget her the next day; no record is kept of her triumphs. A painter now, who spends years of his life in earnest study—it does not matter to him whether the public applaud or not, whether they forget or not. He has always before him these evidences of his genius; and among his friends he can choose his fit audience. Even when he is an old man, and listening to the praises of all the young fellows who have caught the taste of the public, he can at all events show something of his work as testimony of what he was. But an actress, the moment she leaves the stage, is a snuffed-out candle. She has her stage-dresses to prove that she acted certain parts; and she may have a scrap-book with cuttings of criticisms from the provincial papers! You know, dear Keith, all this is very heart-sickening; and I am quite aware that it will trouble you—as it troubles me, and sometimes makes me ashamed of myself—but then it is true, and it is better for both of us that it should be known. I could not undertake to be a hypocrite all my life. I must confess to you, whatever be the consequences, that I distinctly made a mistake when I thought it was such an easy thing to adopt a whole new set of opinions and tastes and habits. The old Adam, as your Scotch ministers would say, keeps coming back to jog my elbow as an old familiar friend. And you would not have me conceal the fact from you? I know how difficult it will be for you to understand or sympathize with me. You have never been brought up to a profession, every inch of your progress in which you have to contest against rivals; and

you don't know how jealous one is of one's position when it is gained. I think I would rather be made an old woman of sixty to-morrow morning than get up and go out and find my name printed in small letters in the theatre-bills. And if I try to imagine what my feelings would be if I were to retire from the stage, surely that is in your interest as well as mine. How would you like to be tied for life to a person who was continually looking back to her past career with regret, and who was continually looking around her for objects of jealous and envious anger? Really, I try to do my duty by everybody. All the time I was at Castle Dare I tried to picture myself living there, and taking an interest in the fishing, and the farms, and so on; and if I was haunted by the dread that, instead of thinking about the fishing and the farms, I should be thinking of the triumphs of the actress who had taken my place in the attention of the public, I had to recognize the fact. It is wretched and pitiable, no doubt; but look at my training. If you tell me to be true to myself—that is myself. At all events I feel more contented that I have made a frank confession."

Surely it was a fair and reasonable letter? But the answer that came to it had none of its pleasant common sense. It was all a wild appeal—a calling on her not to fall away from the resolves she had made—not to yield to those despondent moods. There was but the one way to get rid of her doubts and hesitations; let her at once cast aside the theatre and all its associations and malign influences, and become his wife, and he would take her by the hand, and lead her away from that besetting temptation. Could she forget the day on which she gave him the red rose? She was a woman; she could not forget.

She folded up the letter; and held it in her hand; and went into her father's room. There was a certain petulant and irritated look on her face.

"He says he is coming up to London, papa," said she, abruptly.

"I suppose you mean Sir Keith Macleod," said he.

"Well, of course. And can you imagine anything more provoking—just at present, when we are rehearsing this new play, and when all the time I can afford Mr. Lemuel wants for the portrait? I declare the only time I feel quiet, secure, safe from

the interference of anybody—and more especially the worry of the postman—is when I am having that portrait painted; the intense stillness of the studio is delightful, and you have beautiful things all around you. As soon as I open the door, I come out into the world again, with constant vexations and apprehensions all around. Why, I don't know but that at any minute Sir Keith Macleod may come walking up to the gate!"

"And why should that possibility keep you in terror?" said her father, calmly.

"Well, not in terror," said she, looking down, "but—but anxiety, at least; and a very great deal of anxiety. Because I know he will want explanations and promises, and I don't know what—just at the time I am most worried and unsettled about everything I mean to do."

Her father regarded her for a second or two.

"Well?" said he.

"Isn't that enough?" she said, with some indignation.

"Oh," said he, coldly, "you have merely come to me to pour out your tale of wrongs. You don't want me to interfere, I suppose. Am I to condole with you?"

"I don't know why you should speak to me like that, at all events," said she.

"Well, I will tell you," he responded, in the same cool, matter-of-fact way. "When you told me you meant to give up the theatre and marry Sir Keith Macleod, my answer was that you were likely to make a mistake. I thought you were a fool to throw away your position as an actress; but I did not urge the point. I merely left the matter in your own hands. Well, you went your own way. For a time your head was filled with romance—Highland chiefs, and gillies, and red-deer, and baronial halls, and all that stuff; and no doubt you persuaded that young man that you believed in the whole thing fervently, and there was no end to the names you called theatres and everybody connected with them. Not only that, but you must needs drag me up to the Highlands to pay a visit to a number of strangers with whom both you and I lived on terms of apparent hospitality and goodwill, but in reality on terms of very great restraint. Very well. You begin to discover that your romance was a

little bit removed from the actual state of affairs—at least, you say so"——

"I say so!" she exclaimed.

"Hear me out," the father said, patiently. "I don't want to offend you, Gerty, but I wish to speak plainly. You have an amazing faculty for making yourself believe anything that suits you. I have not the least doubt but that you have persuaded yourself that the change in your manner towards Keith Macleod was owing to your discovering that their way of life was different from what you expected; or perhaps that you still had a lingering fancy for the stage—anything you like. I say you could make yourself believe anything. But I must point out to you that any acquaintance of yours—an outsider—would probably look on the marked attentions Mr. Lemuel has been paying you; and on your sudden conversion to the art-theories of himself and his friends; and on the revival of your ambitious notions about tragedy——"

"You need say no more," said she, with her face grown quickly red, and with a certain proud impatience in her look.

"Oh, yes, but I mean to say more," her father said, quietly, "unless you wish to leave the room. I mean to say this—that when you have persuaded yourself somehow that you would rather reconsider your promise to Sir Keith Macleod—am I right?—it does seem rather hard that you should grow ill-tempered with him, and accuse him of being the author of your troubles and vexations. I am no great friend of his—I disliked his coming here at the outset; but I must say that he is a manly young fellow, and I know he would not try to throw the blame of any change in his own sentiments on to some one else. And another thing I mean to say is—that your playing the part of the injured Griselda is not quite becoming, Gerty: at all events, I have no sympathy with it. If you come and tell me frankly that you have grown tired of Macleod, and wish somehow to break your promise to him, then I can advise you."

"And what would you advise, then," said she, with equal calmness, "supposing that you choose to throw all the blame on me?"

"I would say that it is a woman's privilege to be allowed to

change her mind; and that the sooner you told him so the better."

"Very simple!" she said, with a flavour of sarcasm in her tone. "Perhaps you don't know that man as I know him."

"Then you *are* afraid of him?"

She was silent.

"These are certainly strange relations between two people who talk of getting married. But, in any case, he cannot suffocate you in a cave, for you live in London; and in London it is only an occasional young man about Shoreditch who smashes his sweetheart with a poker when she proposes to marry somebody else. He might, it is true, summon you for breach of promise; but he would prefer not to be laughed at. Come, come, Gerty, get rid of all this nonsense. Tell him frankly the position; and don't come bothering me with pretended wrongs and injuries."

"Do you think I ought to tell him?" said she, slowly.

"Certainly."

She went away and wrote to Macleod; but she did not wholly explain her position. She only begged once more for time to consider her own feelings. It would be better that he should not come just now to London. And if she were convinced, after honest and earnest questioning of herself, that she had not the courage and strength of mind necessary for the great change in her life she had proposed, would it not be better for his happiness and hers that the confession should be made?

Macleod did not answer that letter; and she grew alarmed. Several days elapsed. One afternoon, coming home from rehearsal, she saw a card lying on the tray on the hall-table.

"Papa," said she, with her face somewhat paler than usual, "Sir Keith Macleod is in London!"



CHAPTER XXXIX.

A CLIMAX.

She was alone in the drawing-room. She heard the bell ring; and the sound of some one being let in by the front door. Then there was a man's step in the passage outside. The craven heart grew still with dread.

But it was with a great gentleness that he came forward to her, and took both of her trembling hands, and said—

"Gerty, you do not think that I have come to be angry with you—not that!"

He could not but see with those anxious, pained, tender eyes of his that she was very pale; and her heart was now beating so fast—after the first shock of fright—that for a second or two she could not answer him. She withdrew her hands. And all this time he was regarding her face with an eager, wistful intensity.

"It is—so strange—for me to see you again," said he, almost in a bewildered way. "The days have been very long without you—I had almost forgotten what you were like—and now—and now—oh, Gerty, you are not angry with me for troubling you!"

She withdrew a step, and sat down.

"There is a chair," said she: he did not seem to understand what she meant. He was trying to read her thoughts in her eyes, in her manner, in the pale face; and his earnest gaze did not leave her for a moment.

"I know you must be greatly troubled and worried, Gerty; and—and I tried not to come; but your last letter was like the end of the world for me. I thought everything might go then. But then I said, 'Are you a man, and to be cast down by that? She is bewildered by some passing doubt; her mind is sick for the moment; you must go to her, and recall her, and awake her to herself; and you will see her laugh again!' And so I am here, Gerty; and if I am troubling you at a bad time—well, it is only for a moment or two; and you will not mind that? You

and I are so different, Gerty! You are all-perfect. You do not want the sympathy of any one. You are satisfied with your own thinkings; you are a world to yourself. But I cannot live without being in sympathy with you. It is a craving—it is like a fire—Well, I did not come hear to talk about myself."

"I am sorry you took so much trouble," she said, in a low voice—and there was a nervous restraint in her manner. "You might have answered my letter instead."

"Your letter!" he exclaimed. "Why, Gerty, I could not talk to the letter. It was not yourself. It was no more part of yourself than a glove. You will forget that letter—and all the letters that ever you wrote—let them go away like the leaves of former autumns that are quite forgotten; and instead of the letters, be yourself—as I see you now—proud-spirited and noble—my beautiful Gerty—my wife!"

He made a step forward; and caught her hand. She did not see that there were sudden tears in the imploring eyes. She only knew that this vehemence seemed to suffocate her.

"Keith," said she, and she gently disengaged her hand, "will you sit down—and we can talk over this matter calmly, if you please—but I think it would have been better if you left us both to explain ourselves in writing. It is difficult to say certain things without giving pain—and you know I don't wish to do that—"

"I know," said he, with an absent look on his face; and he took the chair she had indicated, and sat down beside her; and now he was no longer regarding her eyes.

"It is quite true that you and I are different," said she, with a certain resolution in her tone, as if she was determined to get through with a painful task—"very seriously different in everything, in our natures, and habits, and opinions, and all the rest of it. How we ever became acquainted I don't know; I am afraid it was not a fortunate accident for either of us. Well——"

Here she stopped. She had not prepared any speech; and she suddenly found herself without a word to say, when words, words, words were all she eagerly wanted in order to cover her retreat. And as for him, he gave her no help. He sat silent—his eyes downcast—a tired and haggard look on his face.

"Well," she resumed, with a violent effort, "I was saying, perhaps we made a mistake in our estimates of each other. That is a very common thing; and sometimes people find out in time, and sometimes they don't. I am sure you agree with me, Keith?"

"Oh yes, Gerty," he answered, absently.

"And then—and then—I am quite ready to confess that I may have been mistaken about myself; and I am afraid you encouraged the mistake. You know, I am quite sure I am not the heroic person you tried to make me believe I was. I have found myself out, Keith; and just in time before making a terrible blunder. I am very glad that it is myself I have to blame. I have got very little resolution. 'Unstable as water' —that is the phrase: perhaps I should not like other people to apply it to me; but I am quite ready to apply it to myself; for I know it to be true; and it would be a great pity if any one's life were made miserable through my fault. Of course, I thought for a time that I was a very courageous and resolute person—you flattered me into believing it; but I have found myself out since. Don't you understand, Keith?"

He gave a sign of assent; his silence was more embarrassing than any protest or any appeal.

"Oh, I could choose such a wife for you, Keith—a wife worthy of you—a woman as womanly as you are manly; and I can think of her being proud to be your wife, and how all the people who came to your house would admire her and love her——"

He looked up in a bewildered way.

"Gerty," he said, "I don't quite know what it is you are speaking about. You are speaking as if some strange thing had come between us; and I was to go one way, and you another, through all the years to come. Why, that is all nonsense! See! I can take your hand—that is the hand that gave me the red rose. You said you loved me, then; you cannot have changed already! I have not changed. What is there that would try to separate us? Only words, Gerty!—a cloud of words, humming round the ears and confusing one. Oh, I have grown heart-sick of them in your letters, Gerty; until I put the letters away altogether, and

I said, 'They are no more than the leaves of last autumn: when I see Gerty, and take her hand, all the words will disappear then.' Your hand is not made of words, Gerty: it is warm, and kind, and gentle—it is a woman's hand. Do you think words are able to make me let go my grasp of it? I put them away. I do not hear any more of them. I only know that you are beside me, Gerty; and I hold your hand!"

He was now no longer the imploring lover: there was a strange elation—a sort of triumph—in his tone.

"Why, Gerty, do you know why I have come to London? It is to carry you off—not with the pipes yelling to drown your screams, as Flora Macdonald's mother was carried off by her lover—but taking you by the hand, and waiting for the smile on your face. That is the way out of all our troubles, Gerty: we shall be plagued with no more words then. Oh, I understand it all, sweetheart—your doubts of yourself, and your thinking about the stage: it is all a return of the old and evil influences that you and I thought had been shaken off for ever. Perhaps that was a little mistake; but no matter. You will shake them off now, Gerty. You will show yourself to have the courage of a woman. It is but one step—and you are free! Gerty," said he, with a smile on his face, "do you know what that is?"

He took from his pocket a printed document, and opened it. Certain words there that caught her eye caused her to turn even paler than she had been; and she would not even touch the paper. He put it back.

"Are you frightened, sweetheart? No! You will take this one step, and you will see how all those fancies and doubts will disappear for ever! Oh, Gerty, when I got this paper into my pocket to-day, and came out into the street, I was laughing to myself; and a poor woman said, 'You are very merry, sir; will you give a poor old woman a copper?' 'Well,' I said, 'here is a sovereign for you, and perhaps you will be merry too!'—and I would have given every one a sovereign if I had had it to give. But do you know what I was laughing at?—I was laughing to think what Captain Macallum would do when you went on board as my wife. For he put up the flags for you when you

were only a visitor coming to Dare; but when I take you by the hand, Gerty, as you are going along the gangway, and when we get on to the paddle-box, and Captain Macallum comes forward, and when I tell him that you are now my wife, why he will not know what to do to welcome you! And Hamish, too —I think Hamish will go mad that day. And then, sweetheart, you will go along to Erraidh, and you will go up to the signal-house on the rocks, and we will fire a cannon to tell the men at Dubh-Artach to look out. And what will be the message you will signal to them, Gerty, with the great white boards? Will you send them your compliments, which is the English way? Ah, but I know what they will answer to you! They will answer in the Gaelic; and this will be the answer that will come to you from the lighthouse—'*A hundred thousand welcomes to the young bride!*' And you will soon learn the Gaelic too; and you will get used to our rough ways; and you will no longer have any fear of the sea. Some day you will get so used to us that you will think the very sea-birds to be your friends, and that they know when you are going away and when you are coming back, and that they know you will not allow any one to shoot them or steal their eggs in the spring-time. But if you would rather not have our rough ways, Gerty, I will go with you wherever you please—did I not say that to you, sweetheart? There are many fine houses in Essex—I saw them when I went down to Woodford with Major Stewart. And for your sake I would give up the sea altogether; and I would think no more about boats; and I would go to Essex with you if I was never to see one of the sea-birds again. That is what I will do for your sake, Gerty, if you wish—though I thought you would be kind to the poor people around us at Dare, and be proud of their love for you, and get used to our homely ways. But I will go into Essex, if you like, Gerty—so that the sea shall not frighten you; and you will never be asked to go into one of our rough boats any more. It shall be just as you wish, Gerty; whether you want to go away into Essex, or whether you will come away with me to the north, that I will say to Captain Macallum, 'Captain Macallum, what will you do now that the English lady has been brave enough to leave her home and her friends to live

with us; and what are we to do now to show that we are pr
and glad of her coming?'"

Well, tears did gather in her eyes as she listened to this w
despairing cry, and her hands were working nervously wit
book she had taken from the table; but what answer could
make? In self-defence against this vehemence she adopted
injured air.

"Really, Keith," said she, in a low voice, "you do not s
to pay any attention to anything I say or write. Surely I h
prepared you to understand that my consent to what you pro
is quite impossible—for the present, at least. I asked for t
to consider."

"I know—I know," said he. "You would wait, and
those doubts close in upon you. But here is a way to de
them all. Sweetheart, why do you not rise—and give me y
hand—and say 'Yes'? There would be no more doubts
all!"

"But surely, Keith, you must understand me when I
that rushing into a marriage in this mad way is a very dange
thing. You won't look or listen to anything I suggest.
really—well, I think you should have some little considera
for me——"

He regarded her for a moment—with a look almost of won
and then he said, hastily—

"Perhaps you are right, Gerty; I should not have been
selfish. But—but you cannot tell how I have suffered—
through the night-time thinking and thinking—and saying
myself that surely you could not be going away from me—
in the morning, oh! the emptiness of all the sea and the s
and you not there to be asked whether you would go out
Colonsay, or round to Loch Scridain, or go to see the ro
pigeons fly out of the caves. It is not a long time since
were with us, Gerty; but to me it seems longer than half-a-dc
of winters; for in the winter I said to myself, 'Ah, well, sh
now working off the term of her imprisonment in the thea
and when the days get long again, and the blue skies come ag
she will use the first of her freedom to come and see the
birds about Dare.' But this last time, Gerty—well, I

strange doubts and misgivings; and sometimes I dreamed in the night-time that you were going away from me altogether—on board a ship—and I called to you and you would not even turn your head. Oh, Gerty, I can see you now as you were then—your head turned partly aside: and strangers round you; and the ship was going farther and farther away; and if I jumped into the sea, how could I overtake you? But at least the waves would come over me; and I should have forgetfulness."

"Yes, but you seem to think that my letters to you had no meaning whatever," said she, almost petulantly. "Surely I tried to explain clearly enough what our relative positions were?"

"You had got back to the influence of the theatre, Gerty—I would not believe the things you wrote. I said, 'You will go now and rescue her from herself. She is only a girl; she is timid; she believes the foolish things that are said by the people around her.' And then, do you know, sweetheart," said he, with a sad smile on his face, "I thought if I were to go and get this paper, and suddenly show it to you—well, it is not the old romantic way, but I thought you would frankly say 'Yes!' and have an end of all this pain. Why, Gerty, you have been many a romantic heroine in the theatre; and you know they are not long in making up their minds. And the heroines in our old songs, too: do you know the song of Lizzie Lindsay, who 'kilted her coats o' green satin,' and was off to the Highlands before any one could interfere with her? That is the way to put an end to doubts. Gerty, be a brave woman! Be worthy of yourself! Sweetheart, have you the courage now to 'kilt your coats o' green satin'? And I know that in the Highlands you will have as proud a welcome as ever Lord Ronald Macdonald gave his bride from the south."

Then the strange smile went away from his face.

"I am tiring you, Gerty," said he.

"Well, you are very much excited, Keith," said she; "and you won't listen to what I have to say. I think your coming to London was a mistake. You are giving both of us a great deal of pain; and, as far as I can see, to no purpose. We could much better have arrived at a proper notion of each other's

feelings by writing; and the matter is so serious as to require consideration. If it is the business of a heroine to plunge two people into life-long misery without thinking twice about it, then I am not a heroine. Her 'coats o' green satin'!—I should like to know what was the end of that story. Now really, dear Keith, you must bear with me if I say that I have a little more prudence than you; and I must put a check on your headstrong wishes. And I know there is no use in our continuing this conversation: you are too anxious and eager to mind anything I say. I will write to you."

"Gerty," said he slowly, "I know you are not a selfish or cruel woman; and I do not think you would willingly pain any one. But if you came to me and said, 'Answer my question; for it is a question of life or death to me,' I should not answer that I would write a letter to you."

"You may call me selfish if you like," said she, with some show of temper, "but I tell you once for all that I cannot bear the fatigue of interviews such as this, and I think it was very inconsiderate of you to force it on me. And as for answering a question, the position we are in is not to be explained with a 'Yes' or a 'No'—it is mere romance and folly to speak of people running away and getting married; for I suppose that is what you mean. I will write to you if you like; and give you every explanation in my power. But I don't think we shall arrive at any better understanding by your accusing me of selfishness or cruelty."

"Gerty!"

"And if it comes to that," she continued, with a flush of angry daring in her face, "perhaps I could bring a similar charge against you, with some better show of reason."

"That I was ever selfish or cruel as regards you!" said he, with a vague wonder, as if he had not heard aright.

"Shall I tell you, then," said she, "as you seem bent on recriminations? Perhaps you thought I did not understand?—that I was too frightened to understand? Oh, I knew very well!"

"I don't know what you mean," said he, in absolute bewilderment.

"What?—not the night we were caught in the storm in crossing to Iona?—and when I clung to your arm, you shook me off, so that you should be free to strike out for yourself if we were thrown into the water. Oh, I don't blame you! It was only natural. But I think you should be cautious in accusing others of selfishness."

For a moment he stood looking at her, with something like fear in his eyes—fear and horror, and a doubt as to whether this thing was possible; and then came the hopeless cry of a breaking heart—

"Oh, God, Gerty! I thought you loved me—and you believed *that!*"

CHAPTER XL.

DREAMS.

This long and terrible night: will it never end? Or will not life itself go out, and let the sufferer have rest? The slow and sleepless hours toil on through the darkness; and there is a ticking of a clock in the hushed room; and this agony of pain still throbbing and throbbing in the breaking heart. And then, as the pale dawn shows grey in the windows, the anguish of despair follows him even into the wan realms of sleep, and there are wild visions rising before the sick brain. Strange visions these are; the confused and seething phantasmagoria of a shattered life; himself regarding himself as another figure, and beginning to pity this poor wretch who is not permitted to die. "Poor wretch—poor wretch!" he says to himself. "Did they use to call you Macleod; and what is it that has brought you to this?"

* * * * *

See now! He lays his head down on the warm heather, on this beautiful summer day; and the seas are all blue around him;

and the sun is shining on the white sands of Iona. Far below, the men are singing "*Fhir a bhata,*" and the sea-birds are softly calling. But suddenly there is a horror in his brain; and the day grows black; for an adder has stung him!—it is *Rihginn*—the Princess—the Queen of Snakes. O why does she laugh, and look at him so with that clear, cruel look? He would rather not go into this still house where the lidless-eyed creatures are lying in their awful sleep. Why does she laugh? Is it a matter for laughing that a man should be stung by an adder, and all his life grow black around him? For it is then that they put him in a grave; and she—she stands with her foot on it! There is moonlight around; and the jackdaws are wheeling overhead; our voices sound hollow in these dark ruins. But you can hear this, sweetheart: shall I whisper it to you? "*You are standing on the grave of Macleod.*"

* * * * *

Lo! tne grave opens! Why, Hamish, it was no grave at all but only the long winter; and now we are looking at a strange thing away in the south, for who ever saw before all the beautiful flags that are fluttering there in the summer wind? O sweetheart!—your hand—give me your small, warm, white hand! See! we will go up the steep path by the rocks; and here is the small white house; and have you never seen so great a telescope before? And is it all a haze of heat over the sea; or can you make out the quivering phantom of the lighthouse—the small grey thing out at the edge of the world? Look! they are signalling now; they know you are here; come out, quick! to the great white boards; and we will send them over a message—and you will see that they will send back a thousand welcomes to the young bride! Our ways are poor; we have no satin bowers to show you, as the old songs say—but do you know who are coming to wait on you? The beautiful women out of the old songs are coming to be your handmaidens—I have asked them—I saw them in many dreams—I spoke gently to them—and they are coming. Do you see them? There is the bonnie Lizzie Lindsay, who kilted her coats o' green satin to be off with young Macdonald; and Burd Helen—she will come to you pale and beautiful; and proud Lady Maisry that was burned for her true love's sake; and Mary

Scott of Yarrow that set all men's hearts aflame. See, they will take you by the hand. They are the Queen's Maries. There is no other grandeur at Castle Dare.

* * *

Is this Macleod? They used to say that Macleod was a man! They used to say that he had not much fear of anything. But this is only a poor trembling boy, a coward trembling at everything, and going away to London with a lie on his lips. And they know how Torquil Macleod died, and how Roderick Macleod died, and how Ronald, and Olaus the Fair-haired, and Hector—but the last of them—this poor wretch—what will they say of him? "Oh, he died for the love of a woman!" She struck him in the heart; and he could not strike back; for she was a woman. Ah, but if it was a man now! They say the Macleods are all become sheep; and their courage has gone; and if they were to grasp even a Rose-leaf they could not crush it. It is dangerous to say that; do not trust to it. Oh, is it you, you poor fool in the newspaper, who are whirling along behind the boat? Does the swivel work? Are the sharks after you? Do you hear them behind you—cleaving the water? The men of Dubh-Artach will have a good laugh when we whisk you past. What! you beg for mercy?—come out, then!—you poor devil! Here is a tarpaulin for you. Give him a glass of whisky, John Cameron! But you—even you—if I were to take you over in the dark, and the storm came on: you would not think that I thrust you aside to look after myself? You are a stranger; you are helpless in boats: do you think I would thrust you aside? It was not fair—oh, it was not fair: if she wished to kill my heart, there were other things to say than that. Why, sweetheart, don't you know that I got the little English boy out of the water; and you think I would let you drown! If we were both drowning, now, do you know what I should do? I would laugh; and say, "Sweetheart, sweetheart, if we were not to be together in life, we are now in death, and that is enough for me."

* * * * *

What is the slow, sad sound that one hears? The grave is on the lonely island; there is no one left on the island now; there is nothing but the grave. "*Man that is born of a woman*

hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery." Oh no, not that! That is all over: the misery is over; and there is peace. This is the sound of the sea-birds, and the wind coming over the seas, and the waves on the rocks. Oh, is it Donald, in the boat going back to the land? The people have their heads bent; it is a Lament the boy is playing. And how will you play the *Cumhadh na Cloinne* to-night, Donald?—and what will the mother say? It is six sons she has to think of now; and Patrick Mòr had but seven dead when he wrote the Lament of the Children. Janet, see to her! Tell her it is no matter now; the peace has come; the misery is over; there is only the quiet sound of the waves. But you, Donald, come here. Put down your pipes; and listen. Do you remember the English lady who was here in the summer-time; and your pipes were too loud for her, and were taken away? She is coming again. She will try to put her foot on my grave. But you will watch for her coming, Donald; and you will go quickly to Hamish; and Hamish will go down to the shore, and send her back. You are only a boy, Donald; she would not heed you; and the ladies at the Castle are too gentle, and would give her fair words; but Hamish is not afraid of her—he will drive her back—she shall not put her foot on my grave—for my heart can bear no more pain.

* * * * *

And are you going away—*Rose-leaf—Rose-leaf*—are you sailing away from me on the smooth waters to the south? I put out my hand to you; but you are afraid of the hard hands of the northern people; and you shrink from me. Do you think we would harm you, then, that you tremble so? The savage days are gone; come—we will show you the beautiful islands in the summer-time; and you will take high courage, and become yourself a Macleod; and all the people will be proud to hear of Fionaghal the Fair Stranger who has come to make her home among us. Oh, our hands are gentle enough when it is a Rose-leaf they have to touch. There was blood on them in the old days; we have washed it off, now: see—this beautiful red rose you have given me is not afraid of rough hands! We have no beautiful roses to give you, but we will give you a piece of white

heather, and that will secure to you peace and rest and a happy heart all your days. You will not touch it, sweetheart? Do not be afraid? There is no adder in it. But if you were to find, now, a white adder, would you know what to do with it? There was a sweetheart in an old song knew what to do with an adder. Do you know the song? The young man goes back to his home and he says to his mother, "O make my bed soon; For I'm weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie doon." Why do you turn so pale, sweetheart? There is the whiteness of a white adder in your cheeks; and your eyes—there is Death in your eyes! Donald!—Hamish! help! help!—her foot is coming near to my grave!—my heart——

* * * * *

* * * * *

And so, in a paroxysm of wild terror and pain, he awoke again, and behold, the ghastly white daylight was in the room—the cold glare of a day he would fain have never seen. It was all in a sort of dream that this haggard-faced man dressed, and drank a cup of tea, and got outside into the rain. The rain, and the noise of the cabs, and the gloom of London skies: these harsh and commonplace things were easier to bear than the dreams of the sick brain. And then, somehow or other, he got his way down to Aldershot, and sought out Norman Ogilvie.

"Macleod!" Ogilvie cried—startled beyond measure by his appearance.

"I—I wanted to shake hands with you, Ogilvie, before I go," said this hollow-eyed man, who seemed to have grown old.

Ogilvie hesitated for a second or two; and then he said, vehemently—

"Well, Macleod, I am not a sentimental fellow—but—but—hang it! it is too bad. And again and again I have thought of writing to you, as your friend, just within the last week or so; and then I said to myself that tale-bearing never came to any good. But she won't darken Mrs. Ross's door again—that I know. Mrs. Ross went straight to her the other day. There is no nonsense about that woman. And when she got to understand that the story was true, she let Miss White know that she

considered you to be a friend of hers, and that—well, you know how women give hints——"

"But I don't know what you mean, Ogilvie!" he cried, quite bewildered. "Is it a thing for all the world to know? What story is it—when I knew nothing till yesterday?"

"Well, you know now: I saw by your face a minute ago that she had told you the truth at last," Ogilvie said. "Macleod, don't blame me. When I heard of her being about to be married, I did not believe the story——"

Macleod sprang at him like a tiger, and caught his arm.

"Her getting married?—to whom?"

"Why, don't you know?" Ogilvie said, with his eyes staring. "Oh, yes, you must know. I see you know! Why, the look in your face when you came into this room——"

"Who is the man, Ogilvie?"—and there was the sudden hate of ten thousand devils in his eyes.

"Why, it's that artist-fellow—Lemuel—you don't mean to say she hasn't told you? It is the common story! Mrs. Ross thought it was only a piece of nonsense—she said they were always making those stories about actresses—but she went to Miss White. And when Miss White could not deny it, Mrs. Ross said there and then they had better let their friendship drop. Macleod, I would have written to you—upon my soul, I would have written to you—but how could I imagine you did not know? And do you really mean to say she has not told you anything of what has been going on recently—what was well known to everybody?"

And this young man spoke in a passion, too: Keith Macleod was his friend. But Macleod himself seemed, with some powerful effort of will, to have got the better of his sudden and fierce hate; he sat down again; he spoke in a low voice; but there was a dark look in his eyes.

"No," said he, slowly, "she has not told me all about it. Well, she did tell me about a poor creature—a woman-man—a thing of affectation, with his paint-box and his velvet coat, and his furniture: Ogilvie, have you got any brandy?"

Ogilvie rang, and got some brandy, some water, a tumbler, and a wine-glass placed on the table. Macleod, with a hand

that trembled violently, filled the tumbler half full with brandy.

"And she could not deny the story to Mrs. Ross?" said he, with a strange and hard smile on his face. "It was her modesty. Ah, you don't know, Ogilvie, what an exalted soul she has. She is full of idealisms. She could not explain all that to Mrs. Ross. *I* know. And when she found herself too weak to carry out her aspirations, she sought help. Is that it? She would gain assurance and courage from the woman-man?"

He pushed the tumbler away; his hand was still trembling violently.

"I will not touch that, Ogilvie," said he, "for I have not much mastery over myself. I am going away now—I am going back now to the Highlands—oh! you do not know what I have become since I met that woman—a coward, and a liar? They wouldn't have you sit down at the mess-table, Ogilvie, if you were that: would they? I dare not stay in London now. I must run away now—like a hare that is hunted. It would not be good for her or for me that I should stay any longer in London."

He rose and held out his hand: there was a curious glazed look on his eyes. Ogilvie pressed him back into the chair again.

"You are not going out in this condition, Macleod—you don't know what you are doing. Come now, let us be reasonable; let us talk over the thing like men. And I must say, first of all, that I am heartily glad of it for your sake. It will be a hard twist at first; but bless you! lots of fellows have had to fight through the same thing, and they come up smiling after it, and you would scarcely know the difference. Don't imagine I am surprised:—oh, no. I never did believe in that young woman; I thought she was a deuced sight too clever; and when she used to go about humbugging this one and the other with her innocent airs, I said to myself, 'Oh, it's all very well; but *she* knows what she is about.' Of course, there was no use talking to you. I believe at one time Mrs. Ross was considering whether she ought not to give you a hint, seeing you had met Miss White first, at her house, that the young lady was rather clever at flirtation, and

that you ought to keep a sharp look-out. But then you would only have blazed up in anger. It was no use talking to you. And then, after all, I said that if you were so bent on marrying her, the chances were that you would have no difficulty, for I thought the bribe of her being called Lady Macleod would be enough for any actress. As for the man Lemuel, no doubt he is a very great man, as people say; but I don't know much about these things myself; and—and—I think it is very plucky of Mrs. Ross to cut off two of her lions at one stroke. It shows she must have taken an uncommon liking for you. So you must cheer up, Macleod. If women take a fancy to you like that, you'll easily get a better wife than Miss White would have made. Mind you, I don't go back from anything I ever said of her. She is a handsome woman, and no mistake; and I will say that she is the best waltzer that I ever met with in the whole course of my life—without exception. But she's the sort of woman who, if I married her, would want some looking after—I mean, that is my impression. The fact is, Macleod, away there in Mull you have been brought up too much on books and your own imagination. You were ready to believe any pretty woman, with soft English ways, an angel. Well, you have had a twister; but you'll come through it; and you will get to believe after all that women are very good creatures, just as men are very good creatures, when you get the right sort. Come now, Macleod, pull yourself together. Perhaps I have just as hard an opinion of her conduct towards you as you have yourself. But you know Tommy Moore, or some fellow like that, says—'If she be not fair to me, what the devil care I how fair she be?' And if I were you, I would have a drop of brandy—but not half a tumbler-full."

But neither Lieutenant Ogilvie's pert common-sense, nor his apt and accurate quotation, nor the proffered brandy, seemed to alter much the mood of this haggard-faced man. He rose.

"I think I will go now," said he in a low voice. "You won't take it unkindly, Ogilvie, that I don't stop to talk with you—it is a strange story you have told me—I want time to think over it. Good-bye!"

"The fact is, Macleod," Ogilvie stammered, as he regarded his

friend's face, "I don't like to leave you. Won't you stay and dine with our fellows? Or shall I see if I can run up to London with you?"

"No, thank you, Ogilvie," said he. "And have you any message for the mother and Janet?"

"Oh, I hope you will remember me most kindly to them. At least, I will go to the station with you, Macleod."

"Thank you, Ogilvie; but I would rather go alone. Good-bye, now."

He shook hands with his friend—in an absent sort of way—and left. But while yet his hand was on the door, he turned and said—

"Oh, do you remember my gun that has the shot barrel and the rifle barrel?"

"Yes, certainly."

'Would you like to have that, Ogilvie?—we sometimes had it when we were out together."

"Do you think I would take your gun from you, Macleod?" said the other. "You will soon have plenty of use for it now."

'Good-bye, then, Ogilvie," said he, and he left and went out into the world of rain and lowering skies and darkening moors.

And when he went back to Dare it was a wet day also; but he was very cheerful; and he had a friendly word for all whom he met; and he told the mother and Janet that he had got home at last, and meant to go no more a-roving. But that evening, after dinner, when Donald began to play the Lament for the memory of the five sons of Dare, Macleod uttered a sort of stifled cry, and there were tears running down his cheeks—which was a strange thing for a man; and he rose and left the hall, just as a woman would have done. And his mother sate there, cold, and pale, and trembling; but the gentle cousin Janet called out, with a piteous trouble in her eyes—

"Oh, auntie, have you seen the look on our Keith's face, ever since he came ashore to-day?"

"I know it, Janet," said she. "I have seen it. That woman has broken his heart—and he is the last of my six brave lads."

They could not speak any more now; for Donald had come up the hall; and he was playing the wild sad wail of the *Cumhadh na Cloinne*.

CHAPTER XLI.

A LAST HOPE.

Those sleepless nights of passionate yearning and despair—those days of sullen gloom broken only by wild cravings for revenge that went through his brain like spasms of fire; these were killing this man. His face grew haggard and grey; his eyes morose and hopeless; he shunned people as if he feared their scrutiny; he brooded over the past in a silence he did not wish to have broken by any human voice. This was no longer Macleod of Dare. It was the wreck of a man—drifting no one knew whither.

And in those dark and morbid reveries there was no longer any bewilderment. He saw clearly how he had been tricked and played with. He understood now the coldness she had shown on coming to Dare; her desire to get away again; her impatience with his appeals; her anxiety that communication between them should be solely by letter. "Yes, yes," he would say to himself—and sometimes he would laugh aloud in the solitude of the hills, "she was prudent. She was a woman of the world, as Stewart used to say. She would not quite throw me off—she would not be quite frank with me—until she had made sure of the other. And in her trouble of doubt, when she was trying to be better than herself, and anxious to have guidance, *that* was the guide she turned to—the woman-man, the dabbler in paint-boxes, the critic of carpets and wall-papers!"

Sometimes he grew to hate her. She had destroyed the world for him. She had destroyed his faith in the honesty and honour of womanhood. She had played with him as with a toy—a fancy of the brain—and thrown him aside when something new was presented to her. And when a man is stung by a white adder, does he not turn and stamp with his heel? Is he not bound to crush the creature out of existence, to keep God's earth and the free sunlight sweet and pure?

But then—but then—the beauty of her! In dreams he heard

her low, sweet laugh again; he saw the beautiful brown hair; he surrendered to the irresistible witchery of the clear and lovely eyes. What would not a man give for one last, wild kiss of the laughing and half-parted lips? His life? And if that life happened to be a mere broken and useless thing—a hateful thing—would he not gladly and proudly fling it away? One long, lingering, despairing kiss; and then a deep draught of Death's black wine!

One day he was riding down to the fishing-station when he met John Macintyre the postman, who handed him a letter, and passed on. Macleod opened this letter with some trepidation, for it was from London; but it was in Norman Ogilvie's handwriting.

"Dear Macleod,—I thought you might like to hear the latest news. I cut the enclosed from a sort of half-sporting, half-theatrical paper our fellows get; no doubt the paragraph is true enough. And I wish it was well over and done with; and she married out of hand; for I know until that is so, you will be torturing yourself with all sorts of projects and fancies. Good-bye, old fellow. I suppose when you offered me your gun, you thought your life had collapsed altogether, and that you would have no further use for anything. But no doubt, after the first shock, you have thought better of that. How are the birds? I hear rather bad accounts from Ross; but then he is always complaining about something.

"Yours sincerely,

"Norman Ogilvie."

And then he unfolded the newspaper cutting which Ogilvie had enclosed. The paragraph of gossip announced that the Piccadilly Theatre would shortly be closed for repairs; but that the projected provincial tour of the company had been abandoned. On the re-opening of the theatre, a play, which was now in preparation, written by Mr. Gregory Lemuel, would be produced. "It is understood," continued the newsman, "that Miss Gertrude White, the young and gifted actress who has been the chief attraction at the Piccadilly Theatre for two years back, is to be

married to Mr. Lionel Lemuel, the well-known artist; but public have no reason to fear the withdrawal of so popul favourite; for she has consented to take the chief *rôle* in new play, which is said to be of a tragic nature."

Macleod put the letter and its enclosure into his pocket; rode on. The hand that held the bridle shook somewhat; was all.

He met Hamish.

"Oh, Hamish!" he cried quite gaily. "Hamish, will yo to the wedding?"

"What wedding, sir?" said the old man; but well he k If there was any one blind to what had been going on, that not Hamish; and again and again he had in his heart cursed English traitress who had destroyed his master's peace.

"Why, do you not remember the English lady that was not so long ago? And she is going to be married. And w you like to go to the wedding, Hamish!"

He scarcely seemed to know what he was saying in this way; there was a strange look in his eyes, though apparentl was very merry. And this was the first word he had utt about Gertrude White to any living being at Dare ever sinc last return from the south.

Now what was Hamish's answer to this gay invitation? Gaelic tongue has very few of those meaningless explet which, in other languages, express mere annoyance or tem when a Highlander swears, he usually swears in English. the Gaelic curse is a much more solemn and deliberate affair

"*May her soul dwell in the lowermost hall of perdition!* that was the answer that Hamish made; and there was a l of anger in the keen eyes and in the proud and handsome fa

"Oh, yes," continued the old man in his native tongue, he spoke rapidly and passionately, "I am only a serving-n and perhaps a serving-man ought not to speak; but perl sometimes he will speak. And have I not seen it all, Sir Ke —and no more of the pink letters coming; and you going a a changed man, as if there was nothing more in life for y And now you ask me if I will go to the wedding! And w do I say to you, Sir Keith? I say this to you—that the wo

is not now living who will put that shame on Macleod of Dare!"

Macleod regarded the old man's angry vehemence almost indifferently; he had grown to pay little heed to anything around him.

"Oh, yes, it is a fine thing for the English lady," said Hamish, with the same proud fierceness, "to come here and amuse herself. But she does not know the Mull men yet. Do you think, Sir Keith, that any one of your forefathers would have had this shame put upon him? I think not. I think he would have said, 'Come, lads, here is a proud madam that does not know that a man's will is stronger than a woman's will; and we will teach her a lesson. And before she has learned that lesson, she will discover that it is not safe to trifle with a Macleod of Dare.' And you ask me if I will go to the wedding! I have known you since you were a child, Sir Keith; and I put the first gun in your hand; and I saw you catch your first salmon; it is not right to laugh at an old man."

"Laughing at you, Hamish? I gave you an invitation to a wedding!"

"And if I was going to that wedding," said Hamish, with a return of that fierce light to the grey eyes, "do you know how I would go to the wedding? I would take two or three of the young lads with me. We would make a fine party for the wedding. Oh, yes; a fine party! And if the English church is a fine church, can we not take off our caps as well as any one? But when the pretty madam came in, I would say to myself, 'O yes, my fine madam, you forgot it was a Macleod you had to deal with, and not a child, and you did not think you would have a visit from two or three of the Mull lads?"

"And what then?" Macleod said with a smile—though this picture of his sweetheart coming into the church as the bride of another man had paled his cheek.

"And before she had brought that shame on the house of Dare," said Hamish, excitedly, "do you not think that I would seize her—that I would seize her with my own hands? And when the young lads and I had thrust her down into the cabin of the yacht—oh, yes, when we had thrust her down and shut

the companion, do you think the proud madam would be so proud?"

Macleod laughed a loud laugh.

"Why, Hamish, you want to become a famous person! would carry off a popular actress; and have all the cou ringing with the exploit! And would you have a piper, tc drown her screams, just as Macdonald of Armadale did whe came with his men to South Uist and carried off] Macdonald's mother?"

"And was there ever a better marriage than that—as I heard many a man of Skye say?" Hamish exclaimed, eag "Oh yes, it is good for a woman to know that a man's wi stronger than a woman's will! And when we have the English madam caged up in the cabin, and we are coming ε to the north again, she will not have so many fine airs, I tł And if the will cannot be broken, it is the neck that ca: broken; and better that than that Sir Keith Macleod sh have a shame put on him."

"Hamish, Hamish, how will you dare to go into the ch at Salen next Sunday!" Macleod said; but he was regarding the old man with a strange curiosity.

"Men were made before churches were thought of," Ha: said, curtly; and then Macleod laughed, and rode on.

The laugh soon died away from his face. Here was the s bridge on which she used to lean to drop pebbles into whirling clear water. Was there not some impression ever of her soft warm arm on the velvet moss? And what had voice of the streamlet told him in the days long ago—that summer time was made for happy lovers; that she was com that he should take her hand and show her the beautiful isl and the sunlit seas before the darkening skies of the winter c over them. And here was the summer sea; and moist, w odours were in the larch-wood; and out there Ulva was shi green, and there was sunlight on the islands and on the rock Erisgeir. But she—where was she? Perhaps standing b a mirror; with a dress all of white; and trying how ora blossoms would best lie in her soft brown hair. Her arms uplifted to her head; she smiles:—could not one suddenly

her now by the waist, and bear her off, with the smile changed to a blanched look of fear? The wild pirates have got her; the Rose-leaf is crushed in the cruel northern hands; at last—at last—what is in the scabbard has been drawn, and declared, and she screams in her terror!

Then he fell to brooding again over Hamish's mad scheme. The fine English church of Hamish's imagination was no doubt a little stone building that a handful of sailors could carry at a rush. And of course the yacht must needs be close by; for there was no land in Hamish's mind that was out of sight of the salt water. And what consideration would this old man have for delicate fancies and studies in moral science? The fine madam had been chosen to be the bride of Macleod of Dare; that was enough. If her will would not bend, it would have to be broken. That was the good old way: was there ever a happier wife than the Lady of Armadale, who had been carried screaming down-stairs in the night time, and placed in her lover's boat, with the pipes playing a wild pibroch all the time?

Macleod was in the library that night when Hamish came to him with some papers. And just as the old man was about to leave, Macleod said to him—

"Well, that was a pretty story you told me this morning, Hamish, about the carrying off of the young English lady. And have you thought any more about it?"

"I have thought enough about it," Hamish said, in his native tongue.

"Then perhaps you could tell me, when you start on this fine expedition, how you are going to have the yacht taken to London? The lads of Mull are very clever, Hamish, I know; but do you think that any one of them can steer the *Umpire* all the way from Loch-na-Keal to the river Thames?"

"Is it the river Thames?" said Hamish, with superb contempt. "And is that all—the river Thames? Do you know this, Sir Keith, that my cousin Colin Laing, that has a whisky-shop now in Greenock, has been all over the world, and at China and other places; and he was the mate of many a big vessel; and do you think he could not take the *Umpire* from Loch-na-Keal to London? And I would only have to send a line to him and say,

'Colin, it is Sir Keith Macleod himself that will want you to do this;' and then he will leave twenty or thirty shops, ay, fifty and a hundred shops, and think no more of them at all. Oh, yes, it is very true what you say, Sir Keith. There is no one knows better than I the soundings in Loch Scridain and Loch Tua; and you have said yourself that there is not a bank or a rock about the islands that I do not know; but I have not been to London. No, I have not been to London. But is there any great trouble in getting to London? No, none at all; when we have Colin Laing on board."

Macleod was apparently making a gay joke of the matter; but there was an anxious, intense look in his eyes all the same—even when he was staring absently at the table before him.

"Oh, yes, Hamish," he said, laughing in a constrained manner, "that would be a fine story to tell. And you would become very famous—just as if you were working for fame in a theatre; and all the people would be talking about you. And when you get to London, how would you get through the London streets?"

"It is my cousin who would show me the way: has he not been to London more times than I have been to Stornoway?"

"But the streets of London—they would cover all the ground between here and Loch-na-Keal; and how would you carry the young lady through them?"

"We would carry her," said Hamish, curtly.

"With the bagpipes to drown her screams?"

"I would drown her screams myself," said Hamish, with a sudden savageness; and he added something that Macleod did not hear.

"Do you know that I am a magistrate, Hamish?"

"I know it, Sir Keith."

"And when you come to me with this proposal, do you know what I should do?"

"I know what the old Macleods of Dare would have done," said Hamish, proudly, "before they let this shame come on them. And you, Sir Keith—you are a Macleod too; ay, and the bravest lad that ever was born in Castle Dare! And you will not suffer this thing any longer, Sir Keith; for it is a sore heart I have from the morning till night; and it is only a serving-man that I

am; but sometimes when I will see you going about—and nothing now cared for, but a great trouble on your face—oh, then I say to myself, 'Hamish, you are an old man, you have not long to live; but before you die you will teach the fine English madam what it is to bring a shame on Sir Keith Macleod!'"

"Ah, well, good night now, Hamish: I am tired," he said; and the old man slowly left.

He was tired—if one might judge by the haggard cheeks and the heavy eyes; but he did not go to sleep. He did not even go to bed. He spent the live-long night, as he had spent too many lately, in nervously pacing to and fro within this hushed chamber; or seated with his arms on the table, and the aching head resting on his clasped hands. And again those wild visions came to torture him—the product of a sick heart and a bewildered brain; only now there was a new element introduced. This mad project of Hamish's, at which he would have laughed in a saner mood, began to intertwist itself with all these passionate longings and these troubled dreams of what might yet be possible to him on earth; and wherever he turned it was suggested to him; and whatever was the craving and desire of the moment, this, and only this, was the way to reach it. For if one were mad with pain; and determined to crush the white adder that had stung one, what better way than to seize the hateful thing and cage it, so that it should do no more harm among the sons of men? Or if one were mad because of the love of a beautiful Princess—and she far away, and dressed in bridal robes: what better way than to take her hand, and say, "Quick, quick, to the shore! For the summer seas are waiting for you; and there is a home for the bride far away in the north"? Or if it was only one wild, despairing effort—one last means of trying—to bring her heart back again? Or if there was but the one fierce, captured kiss of those lips no longer laughing at all? Men had ventured more for far less reward, surely! And what remained to him in life but this? There was at least the splendid joy of daring and action!

The hours passed; and sometimes he fell into a troubled sleep as he sat with his head bent on his hands—but then it was only to see those beautiful pictures of her that made his heart ache till

the more. And sometimes he saw her in sailor-like whi blue, as she was stepping down from the steamer; and som he saw the merry Duchess coming forward through the ball- with her saucy eyes and her laughing and parted lips sometimes he saw her before a mirror; and again she smi but his heart would fain have cried aloud in its anguish. again he would start up, and look at the window. W impatient for the day?

The lamp still burned in the hushed chamber. trembling fingers he took out the letter Ogilvie had writ him, and held the slip of printed paper before his bewil gaze. "The young and gifted actress." She is "shortly married." And the new piece that all the world will co see, as soon as she is returned from the wedding tour, is " tragic nature."

* * * * *

Hamish, Hamish, do you hear these things? Do you what they mean? Oh, we will have to look sharp if we be there in time. Come along, you brave lads; it is not th time a Macleod has carried off a bride. And will she c you think?—for we have no pipes to drown her screams. but we will manage it another way than that, Hamish! have no cunning, you old man! There will be no scream, the white adder is seized and caged.

* * * *

But surely no white adder! O sweetheart, you gave me rose! And do you remember the night in the garden, wi moonlight around us, and the favour you wore next your was the badge of the Macleods?—You were not afraid Macleods then; you had no fear of the rude northern p you said they would not crush a pale Rose-leaf. And n now—see! I have rescued you; and those people will pe you no longer; I have taken you away—you are free! will you come up on deck, now; and look around on the su sea? And shall we put into some port, and telegraph th runaway bride is happy enough; and that they will hear next from Castle Dare? Look around, sweetheart; surel know the old boat. And here is Christina to wait on you

Hamish—Hamish will curse you no more—he will be your friend now. Oh, you make the mother's heart glad at last: she has not smiled for many a day.

* * * * *

Or is it the proud madam that is below, Hamish; and she will not speak; and she sits alone in all her finery? And what are we to do with her now, then—to break her will? Do you think she will speak when she is in the midst of the silence of the northern seas? Or will they be after us, Hamish? Oh, that would be a fine chase, indeed; and we would lead them a fine dance through the Western Isles; and I think you would try their knowledge of the channels and the banks. And the painter-fellow, Hamish, the woman-man, the dabbler—would he be in the boat behind us?—or would he be down below, in bed in the cabin, with a nurse to attend him? Come along, then!—but beware of the overfalls off Tiree, you southern men! Or is it a race for Barra Head; and who will be at Vatersay first? There is good fishing-ground on the Sgriobh bhan, Hamish; they may as well stop to fish as seek to catch us among our western isles! See, the dark is coming down; is that the Monach-light in the north?—Hamish, Hamish, we are on the rocks!—and there is no one to help her! Oh, sweetheart!—sweetheart!—

* * * * *

The brief fit of struggling sleep is over; he rises, and goes to the window; and now, if he is impatient for the new day, behold! the new day is here. Oh, see, how the wan light of the morning meets the wan face!—It is the face of a man who has been close to Death; it is the face of a man who is desperate. And if, after the terrible battle of the night, with its uncontrollable yearning and its unbearable pain, the fierce and bitter resolve is taken?—if there remains but this one last despairing venture for all that made life worth having? How wildly the drowning man clutches at this or that, so only that he may breathe for yet a moment more. He knows not what miracle may save him; he knows not where there is any land; but only to live—only to breathe for another moment—that is his cry. And then, mayhap, amid the wild whirl of waves, if he were suddenly to catch sight of the shore; and think that he was getting near to that;

"And we are going, Sir Keith?" the old man said; and ther was a look of proud triumph in the keen face.

"Oh, I do not know yet," Macleod said, impatiently. "Bu you will tell Christina that, if we are going away to the south we may have lady-visitors come on board, some day or another and she would be better than a young lass to look after them and make them comfortable on board. And if there are an clothes or ribbons she may want from Salen, Donald can go ove with the pony: and you will not spare any money, Hamish."

"Very well, sir."

"And you will not send the boat out to the *Pioneer* till I giv you a letter; and you will ask the clerk to be so kind as to pos it for me to-night at Oban; he must not forget that."

"Very well, sir," said Hamish; and he left the room, with determined look about his lips, but with a glad light in hi eyes.

This was the second letter Macleod wrote; and he had t keep whispering to himself "Caution! caution!" or he woul have broken into some wild appeal to his sweetheart far away.

"DEAR GERTRUDE," he wrote, "I gather from your note tha it is true you are going to get married. I had heard some tim ago; so your letter was no great shock to me; and what I hav suffered—well, that can be of no interest to you now, and it wil do me no good to recall it. As to your message, I would forgiv you freely; but how can I forget? Can you forget? Do yo remember the red rose? But that is all over now, I suppose and I should not wonder if I were after all to be able to obe you, and to forget very thoroughly—not that alone, but everythin else. For I have been rather ill of late—more through sleepless ness than any other cause, I think; and they say I must go fo a long sea-voyage; and the mother and Janet both say I shoul be more at home in the old *Umpire*—with Hamish and Christina and my own people round me—than in a steamer; and so I ma not hear of you again until you are separated from me for ever But I write now to ask you if you would like your letters return ed; and one or two keepsakes; and the photographs: I woul not like them to fall into other hands; and sometimes I feel s

voyage. He had to prepare the mother and Janet for his going away. And might not Norman Ogilvie find out somehow when the marriage was to be, so that he would know how much time was left him?

But with all this eagerness and haste, he kept whispering to himself counsels of caution and prudence. He dared not awaken her suspicion by professing too much forgiveness or friendliness. He wrote to her—with what a trembling hand he put down those words, *Dear Gertrude*, on paper, and how wistfully he regarded them!—but the letter was a proud and cold letter. He said that he had been informed she was about to be married; he wished to ascertain from herself whether that was true. He would not reproach her, either with treachery or deceit; if this was true, passionate words would not be of much avail. But he would prefer to be assured, one way or another, by her own hand. That was the substance of the letter.

And then the answer! He almost feared she would not write. But when Hamish himself brought that pink envelope to him, how his heart beat! And the old man stood there in silence, and with gloom on his face; was there to be, after all, no act of vengeance on her who had betrayed Macleod of Dare?

The few words seemed to have been written with unsteady fingers. He read them again and again. Surely there was no dark mystery within them?—

"*Dear Keith, I cannot bear to write to you. I do not know how it has all happened. Forgive me if you can; and forget me. G.*"

"Oh, Hamish," said he, with a strange laugh, "is it an easy thing to forget that you have been alive? That would be an easy thing, if one were to ask you? But is not Colin Laing coming here to-day?"

"Oh yes, Sir Keith," Hamish said, with his eyes lighting up eagerly, "he will be here with the *Pioneer*, and I will send the boat out for him. Oh, yes, and you are wanting to see him, Sir Keith?"

"Why, of course!" Macleod said. "If we are going away on a long voyage, do we not want a good pilot?"

"And we are going, Sir Keith?" the old man said; and tl was a look of proud triumph in the keen face.

"Oh, I do not know yet," Macleod said, impatiently. " you will tell Christina that, if we are going away to the so we may have lady-visitors come on board, some day or anotl and she would be better than a young lass to look after th and make them comfortable on board. And if there are clothes or ribbons she may want from Salen, Donald can go with the pony: and you will not spare any money, Hamish.

"Very well, sir."

"And you will not send the boat out to the *Pioneer* till I you a letter; and you will ask the clerk to be so kind as to it for me to-night at Oban; he must not forget that."

"Very well, sir," said Hamish; and he left the room, wi determined look about his lips, but with a glad light in eyes.

This was the second letter Macleod wrote; and he ha keep whispering to himself "Caution! caution!" or he w have broken into some wild appeal to his sweetheart far awa

"Dear Gertrude," he wrote, "I gather from your note it is true you are going to get married. I had heard some ago; so your letter was no great shock to me; and what I suffered—well, that can be of no interest to you now, and it do me no good to recall it. As to your message, I would for you freely; but how can I forget? Can you forget? Do remember the red rose? But that is all over now, I supp and I should not wonder if I were after all to be able to you, and to forget very thoroughly—not that alone, but everyt else. For I have been rather ill of late—more through sleep ness than any other cause, I think; and they say I must g a long sea-voyage; and the mother and Janet both say I sh be more at home in the old *Umpire*—with Hamish and Chris and my own people round me—than in a steamer; and so I not hear of you again until you are separated from me for But I write now to ask you if you would like your letters ret ed; and one or two keepsakes; and the photographs: I w not like them to fall into other hands; and sometimes I fe

sick at heart that I doubt whether I shall ever again get back to Dare. There are some flowers, too; but I would ask to be allowed to keep them, if you have no objection—and the sketch of Ulva, that you made on the deck of the *Umpire*, when we were coming back from Iona, I would like to keep that, if you have no objection. And I remain your faithful friend,

"KEITH MACLEOD."

Now at the moment he was writing this letter, Lady Macleod and her niece were together; the old lady at her spinning-wheel, the younger one sewing. And Janet Macleod was saying—

"Oh, auntie, I am so glad Keith is going away now in the yacht; and you must not be vexed at all or troubled if he stays a long time; for what else can make him well again? Why, you know that he has not been Keith at all of late—he is quite another man—I do not think any one would recognize him. And surely there can be no better cure for sleeplessness than the rough work of the yachting; and you know Keith will take his share, in spite of Hamish; and if he goes away to the south, they will have watches, and he will take his watch with the others, and his turn at the helm. Oh, you will see the change when he comes back to us!"

The old lady's eyes had slowly filled with tears.

"And do you think it is sleeplessness, Janet," said she, "that is the matter with our Keith? Ah, but you know better than that, Janet."

Janet Macleod's face grew suddenly red; but she said, hastily—

"Why, auntie, have I not heard him walking up and down all the night, whether it was in his room or in the library? And then he is out before any one is up: oh, yes, I know that when you cannot sleep, the face grows white, and the eyes grow tired. And he has not been himself at all—going away like that from every one; and having nothing to say; and going away by himself over the moors. The night before last, when he came back from Kinloch, he was wet through, and he only lay down on the bed, as Hamish told me, and would have slept there all the night, but for Hamish. And do you not think that was to get

sleep at last—that he had been walking so far, and com
through the shallows of Loch Scridain too? Ah, but you
see the difference, auntie, when he comes back on board
Umpire, and we will go down to the shore; and we will be g
to see him that day."

"Oh yes, Janet," the old lady said, and the tears were r
ning down her face, "but you know—you know. And if
had married you, Janet, and stayed at home at Dare, th
would have been none of all this trouble. And now—wha
there now? It is the young English lady that has broken
heart; and he is no longer a son to me, and he is no lon
your cousin, Janet; but a broken-hearted man, that does
care for anything. You are very kind, Janet; you would
say any harm of any one. But I am his mother I—I—w
if the woman was to come here this day, do you think I wo
not speak? It was a bad day for us all that he went awa
instead of marrying you, Janet."

"But you know that could never have been, auntie," said
gentle-eyed cousin, though there was some conscious flush
pride in her cheeks. "I could never have married Keith."

"But why, Janet?"

"You have no right to ask me, auntie. But he and I—
did not care for each other—I mean, we never could have b
married. I hope you will not speak about that any m
auntie."

"And some day they will take me, too, away from Da
said the old dame, and the spinning-wheel was left unhee
"and I cannot go into the grave with my five brave lads—
where are they all now, Janet?—in Arizona one, in Africa
and two in the Crimea, and my brave Hector at Königg
But that is not much; I shall be meeting them all togeth
and do you not think I shall be glad to see them all toge
again just as it was in the old days; and they will come to m
me; and they will be glad enough to have the mother w
them once again? But, Janet, Janet, how can I go to th
What will I say to them when they ask about Keit
about Keith, my Benjamin, my youngest, my hands
lad?"

The old woman was sobbing bitterly; and Janet went to her and put her arms around her, and said,—

"Why, auntie, you must not think of such things. You will send Keith away in low spirits if you have not a bright face and a smile for him when he goes away."

"But you do not know—you do not know," the old woman said, "what Keith has done for me. The others—oh, yes, they were brave lads; and very proud of their name, too; and they would not disgrace their name wherever they went; and if they died—that is nothing; for they will be together again now: and what harm is there? But Keith, he was the one that did more than any of them; for he stayed at home for my sake; and when other people were talking about this regiment and that regiment, Keith would not tell me what was sore at his heart; and never once did he say, 'Mother, I must go away like the rest,' though it was in his blood to go away. And what have I done now?—and what am I to say to his brothers when they come to ask me? I will say to them, 'Oh, yes, he was the handsomest of all my six lads; and he had the proudest heart, too; but I kept him at home. And what came of it all? Would it not be better now that he was lying buried in the jungle of the Gold Coast, or at Königgrätz, or in the Crimea?"

"Oh, surely not, auntie! Keith will come back to us soon; and when you see him well and strong again; and when you hear his laugh about the house—surely you will not be wishing that he was in his grave? Why, what is the matter with you to-day, auntie?"

"The others did not suffer much, Janet; and to three of them, any way, it was only a bullet—a cry—and then the death-sleep of a brave man, and the grave of a Macleod. But Keith, Janet—he is my youngest—he is nearer to my heart than any of them: do you not see his face?"

"Yes, auntie," Janet Macleod said, in a low voice. "But he will get over that. He will come back to us strong and well."

"Oh, yes, he will come back to us strong and well!" said the old lady, almost wildly, and she rose, and her face was pale. "But I think it is a good thing for that woman that my other

sons are all away now; for they had quick tempers, those lads; and they would not like to see their brother murdered."

"Murdered, auntie!"

Lady Macleod would have answered in the same wild passionate way; but at this very moment her son entered. She turned quickly; she almost feared to meet the look of his haggard face. But Keith Macleod said, quite cheerfully—

"Well now, Janet, will you go round to-day to look at the *Umpire?* And will you come too, mother? Oh, she is made very smart now; just as if we were all going away to see the Queen."

"I cannot go to-day, Keith," said his mother, and she left the room before he had time to notice that she was strangely excited.

"I think I will go some other day, Keith," his cousin said, gently, "just before you start, that I may be sure you have not forgotten anything. And, of course, you will take the ladies, cabin, Keith, for yourself; for there is more light in that; and it is further away from the noise of the forecastle in the morning. But how can you be going to-day, Keith, when the man from Greenock will be here soon now?"

"Why, I forgot that, Janet," said he, laughing in a nervous way. "I forgot that, though I was talking to Hamish about him only a little while ago. And I think I might as well go out to meet the *Pioneer* myself, if the boat has not left yet. Is there anything you would like to get from Oban, Janet?"

"No, nothing, thank you, Keith," said she; and then he left; and he was in time to get into the big sailing-boat before it went out to meet the steamer.

This cousin of Hamish, who jumped into the boat when Macleod's letter had been handed up to the clerk, was a little, black-haired Celt, beady-eyed, nervous, but with the affectation of a sailor's bluffness, and he wore rings in his ears. However, when he was got ashore, and taken into the library, Macleod very speedily found out that the man had some fair skill in navigation, and that he had certainly been into a good number of ports in his lifetime. And if one were taking the *Umpire* into the mouth of the Thames, now? Mr. Laing looked doubtfully at the general chart Macleod had; he said he would rather

have a special chart which he could get at Greenock; for there were a great many banks about the mouth of the Thames; and he was not sure that he could remember the channel. And if one wished to go further up the river, to some anchorage in communication by rail with London? Oh, yes, there was Erith. And if one would rather have moorings than an anchorage, so that one might slip away without trouble when the tide and wind were favourable? Oh, yes, there was nothing simpler than that. There were many yachts about Erith; and surely the pier-master could get the *Umpire* the loan of moorings. All through Castle Dare it was understood that there was no distinct destination marked down for the *Umpire* on this suddenly-arranged voyage of hers; but all the same Sir Keith Macleod's inquiries went no further, at present at least, than the river Thames.

There came another letter, in dainty pink; and this time there was less trembling in the handwriting; and there was a greater frankness in the wording of the note.

"Dear Keith," Miss White wrote, "I would like to have the letters: as for the little trifles you mention, it does not much matter. You have not said that you forgive me; perhaps it is asking too much; but believe me you will find some day it was all for the best. It is better now than later on. I had my fears from the beginning; did not I tell you that I was never sure of myself for a day? And I am sure papa warned me. I cannot make you any requital for the great generosity and forbearance you show to me now; but I would like to be allowed to remain your friend.

"G. W."

"P.S.—I am deeply grieved to hear of your being ill; but hope it is only something quite temporary. You could not have decided better than on taking a long sea-voyage. I hope you will have fine weather."

All this was very pleasant. They had got into the region of correspondence again: and Miss White was then mistress of the situation. His answer to her was less cheerful in tone. It ran thus:—

"Dear Gertrude,—To-morrow morning I leave Dare. have made up your letters, &c., in a packet; but as I wou like to see Norman Ogilvie before going farther south, it possible we may run into the Thames for a day; and so I ha taken the packet with me, and, if I see Ogilvie, I will give it him to put into your hands. And as this may be the last tir that I shall ever write to you, I may tell you now there is n one anywhere more earnestly hopeful than I that you may liv a long and happy life, not troubled by any thinking of what past and irrevocable.

"Yours faithfully,

"Keith Macleod."

So there was an end of correspondence. And now came th beautiful morning, with a fine north-westerly breeze blowing and the *Umpire*, with her mainsail and jib set, and her ga ensign fluttering in the wind, rocking gently down there at he moorings. It was an auspicious morning; of itself it wa enough to cheer up a heart-sick man. The white sea-birds wer calling; and Ulva was shining green; and the Dutchman's Ca out there was of a pale purple-blue; while away in the sout there was a vague silver mist of heat lying all over the Ross o Mull and Iona. And the proud lady of Castle Dare and Janet and one or two others more stealthily, were walking down t the pier to see Keith Macleod set sail; but Donald was no there—there was no need for Donald or his pipes on board th yacht. Donald was up at the house; and looking at the peopl going down to the quay; and saying bitterly to himself, "It i no more thought of the pipes now that Sir Keith has, ever sinc the English lady was at Dare; and he thinks I am better a work in looking after the dogs."

Suddenly Macleod stopped, and took out a pencil, and wrot something on a card.

"I was sure I had forgotten something, Janet," said he "That is the address of Johnny Wickes's mother. We were t send him up to see her some time before Christmas."

"Before Christmas!" Janet exclaimed; and she looked a



him in amazement. "But you are coming back before Christmas, Keith!"

"Oh, well, Janet," said he carelessly, "you know that when one goes away on a voyage, it is never certain about your coming back at all, and it is better to leave everything right."

"But you are not going away from us with thoughts like these in your head, surely?" the cousin said. "Why, the man from Greenock says you could go to America in the *Umpire*, and if you could go to America, there will not be much risk in the calmer seas of the south. And you know, Keith, auntie and I don't want you to trouble about writing letters to us; for you will have enough trouble in looking after the yacht; but you will send us a telegram from the various places you put into."

"Oh, yes, I will do that," said he, somewhat absently. Even the bustle of departure and the brightness of the morning had failed to put colour and life into the haggard face and the hopeless eyes.

That was a sorrowful leave-taking at the shore; and Macleod, standing on the deck of the yacht, could see, long after they had set sail, that his mother and cousin were still on the small quay watching the *Umpire* so long as she was in sight. Then they rounded the Ross of Mull; and he saw no more of the women of Castle Dare.

And this beautiful white-sailed vessel that is going south through the summer seas: surely she is no deadly instrument of vengeance, but only a messenger of peace? Look, now, how she has passed through the Sound of Iona: and the white sails are shining in the light; and far away before her, instead of the islands with which she is familiar, are other islands—another Colonsay altogether, and Islay, and Jura, and Scarba, all a pale transparent blue. And what will the men on the lonely Dubh-Artach rock think of her as they see her pass by? Why, surely that she looks like a beautiful white dove! It is a summer day; the winds are soft; fly south, then, White Dove, and carry to her this message of tenderness, and entreaty, and peace! Surely

the gentle ear will listen to you; before the winter comes, the skies grow dark overhead, and there is no white dove at but an angry sea-eagle, with black wings outspread, and ta ready to strike. O what is the sound in the summer air? it the singing of the sea-maiden of Colonsay, bewailing stil loss of her lover in other years? We cannot stay to listen; winds are fair; fly southward, and still southward, O beautiful White Dove, and it is all a message of love an peace that you will whisper to her ear!

CHAPTER XLIII.

DOVE OR SEA EAGLE?

But there are no fine visions troubling the mind of Hamis he stands here by the tiller in eager consultation with C Laing, who has a chart outspread before him on the d There is pride in the old man's face. He is proud of the formances of the yacht he has sailed for so many years; proud of himself for having brought her—always subjec the advice of his cousin from Greenock—in safety through salt sea to the smooth waters of the great river. And in this is a strange scene for the *Umpire* to find around her in years of her old age. For instead of the giant cliffs of Gri and Bourg there is only the thin green line of the Essex co and instead of the rushing Atlantic there is the broad sm surface of this coffee-coloured stream, splashed with blue w the ripples catch the reflected light of the sky. There is longer the solitude of Ulva and Colonsay, or the moanin the waves round the lonely shores of Fladda, and Staffa, the Dutchman; but the eager, busy life of the great rive black steamer puffing and roaring, russet-sailed barges g smoothly with the tide, a tug bearing a large green-hu Italian ship through the lapping waters, and everywhe

swarming fry of small boats of every description. It is a beautiful summer morning, though there is a pale haze lying along the Essex woods. The old *Umpire*, with the salt foam of the sea encrusted on her bows, is making her first appearance in the Thames.

"And where are we going, Hamish," says Colin Laing, in the Gaelic, "when we leave this place?"

"When you are told, then you will know," says Hamish.

"You had enough talk of it last night in the cabin. I thought you were never coming out of the cabin," says the cousin from Greenock.

"And if I have a master, I obey my master without speaking," Hamish answers.

"Well, it is a strange master you have got. Oh, you do not know about these things, Hamish. Do you know what a gentleman who has a yacht would do when he got into Gravesend as we got in last night? Why he would go ashore, and have his dinner in a hotel, and drink four or five different kinds of wine, and go to the theatre. But your master, Hamish, what does he do? He stays on board; and sends ashore for time-tables, and such things; and what is more than that, he is on deck all night, walking up and down. Oh, yes, I heard him walking up and down all night, with the yacht lying at anchor!"

"Sir Keith is not well. When a man is not well he does not act in an ordinary way. But you talk of my master," Hamish answered proudly. "Well, I will tell you about my master, Colin—that he is a better master than any ten thousand masters that ever were born in Greenock, or in London either. I will not allow any man to say anything against my master."

"I was not saying anything against your master. He is a wiser man than you, Hamish. For he was saying to me last night, 'Now, when I am sending Hamish to such and such places in London, you must go with him, and show him the trains, and cabs, and other things like that.' Oh yes, Hamish, you know how to sail a yacht; but you do not know anything about towns."

"And who would want to know anything about towns? Are

they not full of people who live by telling lies and cheatin other?"

"And do you say that is how I have been able to buy my at Gourock," said Colin Laing, angrily, "with a garden, boat-house too?"

"I do not know about that," said Hamish; and th called out some order to one of the men. Macleod was moment down in the saloon, seated at the table, with a enclosed and addressed lying before him. But surely th not the same man who had been in these still waters Thames in the bygone days—with gay companions aroun and the band playing "A Highland Lad my Love was and a beautiful-eyed girl, whom he called Rose-leaf, talk him in the quiet of the summer noon. This man had a l his eyes like that of an animal that has been hunted to dea is fain to lie down and give itself up to its pursuers i despair of utter fatigue. He was looking at this letter. composition of it had cost him only a whole night's agony. when he sate down and wrote it in the blue-grey dawn, wh he not cast away?

"Oh, no," he was saying now to his own conscience, "sh not call it deceiving! She will laugh when it is all over will call it a stratagem—she will say that a drowning ma catch at anything. And this is the last effort—but it is stratagem: she herself will absolve me—when she laughs an 'Oh, how could you have treated the poor theatres so?'"

A loud rattling overhead startled him.

"We must be at Erith," he said to himself; and then a pause of a second, he took the letter in his hand. He pass the companion-way; perhaps it was the sudden glare of the around that falsely gave to his eyes the appearance of a ma had been drinking hard. But his voice was clear and prec he said to Hamish—

"Now, Hamish, you understand everything I have you?"

"Oh, yes, Sir Keith."

"And you will put away that nonsense from your head; when you see the English lady that you remember, you w

very respectful to her, for she is a very great friend of mine; and if she is not at the theatre, you will go on to the other address, and Colin Laing will go with you in the cab. And if she comes back in the cab, you and Colin will go outside beside the driver, do you understand? And when you go ashore, you will take John Cameron with you, and you will ask the pier-master about the moorings."

"Oh, yes, Sir Keith; have you not told me before?" Hamish said, almost reproachfully.

"You are sure you got everything on board last night?"

"There is nothing more that I can think of, Sir Keith."

"Here is the letter, Hamish."

And so he pledged himself to the last desperate venture.

Not long after that Hamish, and Laing, and John Cameron went in the dingay to the end of Erith pier; and left the boat there; and went along to the head of the pier, and had a talk with the pier-master. Then John Cameron returned to the yacht; and the other two went on their way to the railway-station.

"And I will tell you this, Hamish," said the little black Celt, who swaggered a good deal in his walk, "that when you go in the train you will be greatly frightened. For you do not know how strong the engines are; and how they will carry you through the air."

"That is a foolish thing to say," answered Hamish, also speaking in the Gaelic; "for I have seen many pictures of trains; and do you say that the engines are bigger than the engines of the *Pioneer* or the *Dunara Castle* or the *Clansman* that goes to Stornoway? Do not talk such nonsense to me. An engine that runs along the road, that is a small matter; but an engine that can take you up the Sound of Sleat, and across the Minch, and all the way to Stornoway, that is an engine to be talked about!"

But nevertheless it was with some inward trepidation that Hamish approached Erith station; and it was with an awestruck silence that he saw his cousin take tickets at the office; nor did he speak a word when the train came up and they entered and sate down in the carriage. Then the train moved off, and Hamish breathed more freely: what was this to be afraid of?

sleep at last—that he had been walking so far, and coming through the shallows of Loch Scridain too? Ah, but you will see the difference, auntie, when he comes back on board the *Umpire*, and we will go down to the shore; and we will be glad to see him that day."

"Oh yes, Janet," the old lady said, and the tears were running down her face, "but you know—you know. And if he had married you, Janet, and stayed at home at Dare, there would have been none of all this trouble. And now—what is there now? It is the young English lady that has broken his heart; and he is no longer a son to me, and he is no longer your cousin, Janet; but a broken-hearted man, that does not care for anything. You are very kind, Janet; you would not say any harm of any one. But I am his mother I—I—well, if the woman was to come here this day, do you think I would not speak? It was a bad day for us all that he went away—instead of marrying you, Janet."

"But you know that could never have been, auntie," said the gentle-eyed cousin, though there was some conscious flush of pride in her cheeks. "I could never have married Keith."

"But why, Janet?"

"You have no right to ask me, auntie. But he and I—we did not care for each other—I mean, we never could have been married. I hope you will not speak about that any more, auntie."

"And some day they will take me, too, away from Dare," said the old dame, and the spinning-wheel was left unheeded, "and I cannot go into the grave with my five brave lads—for where are they all now, Janet?—in Arizona one, in Africa one, and two in the Crimea, and my brave Hector at Königgrätz. But that is not much; I shall be meeting them all together; and do you not think I shall be glad to see them all together again just as it was in the old days; and they will come to meet me; and they will be glad enough to have the mother with them once again? But, Janet, Janet, how can I go to them? What will I say to them when they ask about Keith—about Keith, my Benjamin, my youngest, my handsome lad?"

that the gold is mixed with quartz, and you have got to take the quartz out? But I dare say now you do not know what quartz is: for it is a very ignorant man you are, although you can sail a yacht. But I do not grumble at all. You are master of your own yacht; just as I am the master of my own shop. But if you were coming into my shop, Hamish, I would say to you, 'Hamish, you are the master here; and I am not the master; and you can take a glass of anything you like.' That is what people who have travelled all over the world, and seen princes and great cities and palaces, call *politeness.* But how could you know anything about *politeness?* You have lived only on the west coast of Mull; and they do not even know how to speak good Gaelic there."

"That is a lie, Colin," said Hamish, with decision. "We have better Gaelic there than any other Gaelic that is spoken."

"Were you ever in Lochaber, Hamish?"

"No, I was never in Lochaber."

"Then do not pretend to give an opinion about the Gaelic—especially to a man who has travelled all over the world, though perhaps he cannot sail a yacht as well as you, Hamish."

The two cousins soon grew friends again, however. And now, as they were approaching London, a strange thing became visible. The blue sky became obscured. The whole world seemed to be enveloped in a clear brown haze of smoke.

"Ay, ay," said Hamish, "that is a strange thing."

"What is a strange thing, Hamish?"

"I was reading about it in a book many a time—the great fire that was burning in London for years and years and years: and have they not quite got it out, Colin?"

"I do not know what you are talking about, Hamish," said the other, who had not much book-learning, "but I will tell you this, that you may prepare yourself now to open your eyes. Oh, yes, London will make you open your eyes wide; though it is nothing to one who has been to Rio, and Shanghai, and Rotterdam, and other places like that."

Now these references to foreign parts only stung Hamish's pride; and when they did arrive at London Bridge he was determined to show no surprise whatever. He stepped into the

sons are all away now; for they had quick tempers, those lads; and they would not like to see their brother murdered."

"Murdered, auntie!"

Lady Macleod would have answered in the same wild passionate way; but at this very moment her son entered. She turned quickly; she almost feared to meet the look of his haggard face. But Keith Macleod said, quite cheerfully—

"Well now, Janet, will you go round to-day to look at the *Umpire*? And will you come too, mother? Oh, she is made very smart now; just as if we were all going away to see the Queen."

"I cannot go to-day, Keith," said his mother, and she left the room before he had time to notice that she was strangely excited.

"I think I will go some other day, Keith," his cousin said, gently, "just before you start, that I may be sure you have not forgotten anything. And, of course, you will take the ladies, cabin, Keith, for yourself; for there is more light in that; and it is further away from the noise of the forecastle in the morning. But how can you be going to-day, Keith, when the man from Greenock will be here soon now?"

"Why, I forgot that, Janet," said he, laughing in a nervous way. "I forgot that, though I was talking to Hamish about him only a little while ago. And I think I might as well go out to meet the *Pioneer* myself, if the boat has not left yet. Is there anything you would like to get from Oban, Janet?"

"No, nothing, thank you, Keith," said she; and then he left; and he was in time to get into the big sailing-boat before it went out to meet the steamer.

This cousin of Hamish, who jumped into the boat when Macleod's letter had been handed up to the clerk, was a little, black-haired Celt, beady-eyed, nervous, but with the affectation of a sailor's bluffness, and he wore rings in his ears. However, when he was got ashore, and taken into the library, Macleod very speedily found out that the man had some fair skill in navigation, and that he had certainly been into a good number of ports in his lifetime. And if one were taking the *Umpire* into the mouth of the Thames, now? Mr. Laing looked doubtfully at the general chart Macleod had; he said he would rather

"Oh, Mr. Cartwright," said she, "do you think I could go down to Erith and be back before six in the evening?"

"Oh, yes; why not?" said he, carelessly.

But she scarcely heard him. She was still staring at that sheet of paper, with its piteous cry of the sick man. Only to see her once more—to shake hands in token of forgiveness—to say good-bye for the last time: what woman with the heart of a woman could resist the despairing prayer?

"Where is the man who brought this letter?" said she.

"In front, miss," said the young lad, "by the box-office."

Very quickly she made her way along the gloomy and empty corridors, and there in the twilit hall she found the grey-haired old sailor with his cap held humbly in his hands.

"Oh, Hamish," said she, "is Sir Keith so very ill?"

"Is it ill, mem?" said Hamish; and quick tears sprang to the old man's eyes. "He iss more ill than you can think of, mem; it iss another man that he iss now. Ay, ay, who would know him to be Sir Keith Macleod?"

"He wants me to go and see him—and I suppose I have no time to go home first——"

"Here is the list of the trains, mem," said Hamish, eagerly, producing a certain card. "And it iss me and Colin Laing, that's my cousin, mem; and we hef a cab outside; and will you go to the station? Oh, you will not know Sir Keith, mem; there iss no one at all would know my master now."

"Come along, then, Hamish," said she, quickly. "Oh, but he cannot be so ill as that. And the long sea-voyage will pull him round, don't you think?"

"Ay, ay, mem," said Hamish; but he was paying little heed. He called up the cab; and Miss White stepped inside; and he and Colin Laing got on the box.

"Tell him to go quickly," she said to Hamish, "for I must have some scrap of luncheon if we have a minute at the station."

And Miss White, as the cab rolled away, felt pleased with herself. It was a brave act.

"It is the least I can do for the sake of my bonnie Glenogie," she was saying to herself, quite cheerfully. "And if Mr. Lemuel were to hear of it? Well, he must know that I mean to be

"DEAR GERTRUDE,—To-morrow morning I leave Dare. I have made up your letters, &c., in a packet; but as I would like to see Norman Ogilvie before going farther south, it is possible we may run into the Thames for a day; and so I have taken the packet with me, and, if I see Ogilvie, I will give it to him to put into your hands. And as this may be the last time that I shall ever write to you, I may tell you now there is no one anywhere more earnestly hopeful than I that you may live a long and happy life, not troubled by any thinking of what is past and irrevocable.

"Yours faithfully,

"KEITH MACLEOD."

So there was an end of correspondence. And now came this beautiful morning, with a fine north-westerly breeze blowing, and the *Umpire*, with her mainsail and jib set, and her gay ensign fluttering in the wind, rocking gently down there at her moorings. It was an auspicious morning; of itself it was enough to cheer up a heart-sick man. The white sea-birds were calling; and Ulva was shining green; and the Dutchman's Cap out there was of a pale purple-blue; while away in the south there was a vague silver mist of heat lying all over the Ross of Mull and Iona. And the proud lady of Castle Dare and Janet, and one or two others more stealthily, were walking down to the pier to see Keith Macleod set sail; but Donald was not there—there was no need for Donald or his pipes on board the yacht. Donald was up at the house; and looking at the people going down to the quay; and saying bitterly to himself, "It is no more thought of the pipes now that Sir Keith has, ever since the English lady was at Dare; and he thinks I am better at work in looking after the dogs."

Suddenly Macleod stopped, and took out a pencil, and wrote something on a card.

"I was sure I had forgotten something, Janet," said he. "That is the address of Johnny Wickes's mother. We were to send him up to see her some time before Christmas."

"Before Christmas!" Janet exclaimed; and she looked at

that the young English lady should take that cabin. I will tell you this—that it is not the first time nor the second time that the young English lady has gone for a voyage in the *Umpire*, and in that very cabin too. And I will tell you this, Colin; that it is this very year she had that cabin; and was in Loch Tua, and Loch-na-Keal, and Loch Scridain, and Calgary Bay. And as for Christina—oh, it is much you know about fine ladies in Greenock! I tell you that an English lady cannot go anywhere without some one to attend to her."

"Hamish, do not try to make a fool of me," said Laing, angrily. "Do you think a lady would go travelling without any luggage? And she does not know where the *Umpire* is going!"

"Do you know?"

"No."

"Very well, then. It is Sir Keith Macleod who is the master when he is on board the *Umpire*, and where he wants to go, the others have to go."

"Oh, do you think that? And do you speak like that to a man who can pay eighty-five pounds a year of rent?"

"No, I do not forget that it is a kindness to me that you are doing, Colin; and to Sir Keith Macleod, too; and he will not forget it. But as for this young lady, or that young lady, what has that to do with it? You know what the bell of Scoon said, '*That which concerns you not, meddle not with.*'"

"I shall be glad when I am back in Greenock," said Colin Laing, moodily.

But was not this a fine, fair scene that Miss Gertrude White saw around her when they came in sight of the river and Erith pier?—the flashes of blue on the water, the white-sailed yachts, the russet-sailed barges, and the sunlight shining all along the thin line of the Essex shore. The moment she set foot on the pier she recognized the *Umpire* lying out there, the great white mainsail and jib flapping in the summer breeze: but there was no one on deck. And she was not afraid at all; for had he not written in so kindly a fashion to her; and was she not doing much for his sake, too?

"Will the shock be great?" she was thinking to herself. "I hope my bonnie Glenogie is not so ill as that; for he always

looked like a man. And it is so much better that we should part good friends."

She turned to Hamish.

"There is no one on the deck of the yacht, Hamish," said she.

"No, mem," said he, "the men will be at the end of the pier, mem, in the boat, if you please, mem."

"Then you took it for granted I should come back with you?" said she, with a pleasant smile.

"I wass thinking you would come to see Sir Keith, mem," said Hamish, gravely. His manner was very respectful to the fine English lady; but there was not much of friendliness in his look.

She followed Hamish down the rude wooden steps at the end of the pier; and there they found the dingay awaiting them, with two men in her. Hamish was very careful of Miss White's dress as she got into the stern of the boat; then he and Colin Laing got into the bow; and the men half paddled and half floated her along to the *Umpire*—the tide having begun to ebb

And it was with much ceremony, too, that Hamish assisted Miss White to get on board by the little gangway; and for a second or two she stood on deck and looked around her while the men were securing the dingay. The idlers lounging on Erith pier must have considered that this was an additional feature of interest in the summer picture—the figure of this pretty young lady standing there on the white decks and looking around her with a pleased curiosity. It was some little time since she had been on board the *Umpire*.

Then Hamish turned to her, and said, in the same respectful way—

"Will you go below, mem, now? It iss in the saloon that you will find Sir Keith, and if Christina iss in the way, you will tell her to go away, mem."

The small gloved hand was laid on the top of the companion, and Miss White carefully went down the wooden steps. And it was with a gentleness equal to her own that Hamish shut the little doors after her.

But no sooner had she quite disappeared than the old man's

manner swiftly changed. He caught hold of the companion-hatch; jammed it across with a noise that was heard throughout the whole vessel; and then he sprang to the helm, with the keen grey eyes afire with a wild excitement.

"Damn her, we have her now!" he said, between his teeth; and he called aloud: "Haul in the weather jib-sheet there! Let go the moorings, John Cameron! God damn her, we have her now!—and it is not yet that she has put a shame on Macleod of Dare!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE PRISONER.

The sudden noise overhead and the hurried tramp of the men on deck were startling enough; but surely there was nothing to alarm her in the calm and serious face of this man who stood before her. He did not advance towards her. He regarded her with a sad tenderness—as if he were looking at one far away. When the beloved dead come back to us in the wonder-halls of sleep, there is no wild joy of meeting. There is something strange. And when they disappear again, there is no surprise: only the dull aching returns to the heart.

"Gertrude," said he, "you are as safe here as ever you were in your mother's arms. No one will harm you."

"What is it? What do you mean?" said she, quickly.

She was somewhat bewildered. She had not expected to meet him thus suddenly face to face. And then she became aware that the companion-way by which she had descended into the saloon had grown dark: that was the meaning of the harsh noise.

"I want to go ashore, Keith," said she, hurriedly. "Put me on shore. I will speak to you there."

"You cannot go ashore," said he, calmly.

looked like a man. And it is so much better that we should part good friends."

She turned to Hamish.

"There is no one on the deck of the yacht, Hamish," said she.

"No, mem," said he, "the men will be at the end of the pier, mem, in the boat, if you please, mem."

"Then you took it for granted I should come back with you?" said she, with a pleasant smile.

"I wass thinking you would come to see Sir Keith, mem," said Hamish, gravely. His manner was very respectful to the fine English lady; but there was not much of friendliness in his look.

She followed Hamish down the rude wooden steps at the end of the pier; and there they found the dingay awaiting them, with two men in her. Hamish was very careful of Miss White's dress as she got into the stern of the boat; then he and Colin Laing got into the bow; and the men half paddled and half floated her along to the *Umpire*—the tide having begun to ebb

And it was with much ceremony, too, that Hamish assisted Miss White to get on board by the little gangway; and for a second or two she stood on deck and looked around her while the men were securing the dingay. The idlers lounging on Erith pier must have considered that this was an additional feature of interest in the summer picture—the figure of this pretty young lady standing there on the white decks and looking around her with a pleased curiosity. It was some little time since she had been on board the *Umpire*.

Then Hamish turned to her, and said, in the same respectful way—

"Will you go below, mem, now? It iss in the saloon that you will find Sir Keith, and if Christina iss in the way, you will tell her to go away, mem."

The small gloved hand was laid on the top of the companion, and Miss White carefully went down the wooden steps. And it was with a gentleness equal to her own that Hamish shut the little doors after her.

But no sooner had she quite disappeared than the old man's

manner swiftly changed. He caught hold of the companion-hatch; jammed it across with a noise that was heard throughout the whole vessel; and then he sprang to the helm, with the keen grey eyes afire with a wild excitement.

"Damn her, we have her now!" he said, between his teeth; and he called aloud: "Haul in the weather jib-sheet there! Let go the moorings, John Cameron! God damn her, we have her now!—and it is not yet that she has put a shame on Macleod of Dare!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE PRISONER.

The sudden noise overhead and the hurried tramp of the men on deck were startling enough; but surely there was nothing to alarm her in the calm and serious face of this man who stood before her. He did not advance towards her. He regarded her with a sad tenderness—as if he were looking at one far away. When the beloved dead come back to us in the wonder-halls of sleep, there is no wild joy of meeting. There is something strange. And when they disappear again, there is no surprise: only the dull aching returns to the heart.

"Gertrude," said he, "you are as safe here as ever you were in your mother's arms. No one will harm you."

"What is it? What do you mean?" said she, quickly.

She was somewhat bewildered. She had not expected to meet him thus suddenly face to face. And then she became aware that the companion-way by which she had descended into the saloon had grown dark: that was the meaning of the harsh noise.

"I want to go ashore, Keith," said she, hurriedly. "Put me on shore. I will speak to you there."

"You cannot go ashore," said he, calmly.

"I don't know what you mean," said she; and her heart began to beat fast. "I tell you I want to go ashore, Keith. I will speak to you there."

"You cannot go ashore, Gertrude," he repeated. "We have already left Erith. . . . Gerty, Gerty," he continued, for she was struck dumb with a sudden terror, "don't you understand now? I have stolen you away from yourself. There was but the one thing left: the one way of saving you. And you will forgive me, Gerty, when you understand it all——"

She was gradually recovering from her terror. She did understand it now. And he was not ill at all?

"Oh, you coward!—you coward!—you coward!" she exclaimed, with a blaze of fury in her eyes. "And I was to confer a kindness on you—a last kindness! But you dare not do this thing—I tell you, you dare not do it! I demand to be put on shore at once. Do you hear me?"

She turned wildly round, as if to seek for some way of escape. The door in the ladies' cabin stood open; the daylight was streaming down into that bright little place; there were some flowers on the dressing-table. But the way by which she had descended was barred over and dark.

She faced him again; and her eyes were full of fierce indignation and anger; she drew herself up to her full height; she overwhelmed him with taunts, and reproaches, and scorn. That was a splendid piece of acting, seeing that it had never been rehearsed. He stood unmoved before all this theatrical rage.

"Oh, yes, you were proud of your name," she was saying, with bitter emphasis, "and I thought you belonged to a race of gentlemen, to whom lying was unknown. And you were no longer murderous and revengeful; but you can take your revenge on a woman, for all that! And you ask me to come and see you, because you are ill! And you have laid a trap—like a coward!"

"And if I am what you say, Gerty," said he, quite gently, "it is the love of you that has made me that. Oh, you do not know!"

She saw nothing of the lines that pain had written on this

man's face; she recognized nothing of the very majesty of grief in the hopeless eyes. He was only her jailer, her enemy.

"Of course—of course," said she. "It is the woman—it is always the woman who is in fault! That is a manly thing—to put the blame on the woman! And it is a manly thing to take your revenge on a woman! I thought when a man had a rival that it was his rival whom he sought out. But you—you kept out of the way——"

He strode forward, and caught her by the wrist. There was a look in his face that for a second terrified her into silence.

"Gerty," said he, "I warn you. Do not mention that man to me—now or at any time; or it will be bad for him and for you."

She twisted her hand from his grasp.

"How dare you come near me!" she cried.

"I beg your pardon," said he, with an instant return to his former grave gentleness of manner. "I wish to let you know how you are situated, if you will let me, Gerty. I don't wish to justify what I have done; for you would not hear me—just yet. But this I must tell you, that I don't wish to force myself on your society. You will do as you please. There is your cabin; you have occupied it before. If you would like to have this saloon, you can have that, too: I mean I shall not come into it, unless it pleases you. And there is a bell in your cabin; and if you ring it, Christina will answer."

She heard him out patiently; her reply was a scornful—perhaps nervous—laugh.

"Why, this is mere folly," she exclaimed. "It is simple madness. I begin to believe that you are really ill, after all; and it is your mind that is affected. Surely you don't know what you are doing?"

"You are angry, Gerty," said he.

But the first blaze of her wrath and indignation had passed away; and now fear was coming uppermost.

"Surely, Keith, you cannot be dreaming of such a mad thing! Oh, it is impossible. It is a joke; it was to frighten me: it was to punish me, perhaps? Well, I have deserved it;

but now—now you have succeeded; and you will let me go ashore, further down the river."

Her tone was altered. She had been watching his face.

"Oh no, Gerty, oh no," he said. "Do you not understand yet? You were everything in the world to me—you were life itself—without you I had nothing, and the world might just as well come to an end for me. And when I thought you were going away from me, what could I do? I could not reach you by letters, and letters; and how could I know what the people around you were saying to you? Ah, you do not know what I have suffered, Gerty; and always I was saying to myself that if I could get you away from these people, you would remember the time that you gave me the red rose, and all those beautiful days would come back again, and I would take your hand again, and I would forget altogether about the terrible nights when I seemed to see you beside me and heard you laugh just as in the old times. And I knew there was only the one way left. How could I but try that? I knew you would be angry; but I hoped your anger would go away. And now you are angry, Gerty, and my speaking to you is not of much use—as yet; but I can wait until I see you yourself again, as you used to be, in the garden—don't you remember, Gerty?"

Her face was proud, cold, implacable.

"Do I understand you aright—that you have shut me up in this yacht and mean to take me away?"

"Gerty, I have saved you from yourself!"

"Will you be so kind as to tell me where we are going?"

"Why not away back to the Highlands, Gerty?" said he, eagerly. "And then some day when your heart relents, and you forgive me, you will put your hand in mine, and we will walk up the road to Castle Dare. Do you not think they will be glad to see us that day, Gerty?"

She maintained her proud attitude; but she was trembling from head to foot.

"Do you mean to say that until I consent to be your wife I am not to be allowed to leave this yacht?"

"You will consent, Gerty!"

"Not if I were to be shut up here for a thousand years!"

she exclaimed, with another burst of passion. "Oh, you will pay for this dearly! I thought it was madness—mere folly; but if it is true, you will rue this day! Do you think we are savages here?—do you think we have no law?"

"I do not care for any law," said he simply. "I can only think of the one thing in the world: if I have not your love, Gerty, what else can I care about?"

"My love!" she exclaimed. "And this is the way to earn it, truly! My love! If you were to keep me shut up for a thousand years, you would never have it! You can have my hatred, if you like; and plenty of it, too."

"You are angry, Gerty," was all he said.

"Oh, you do not know with whom you have to deal!" she continued, with the same bitter emphasis. "You terrified me with stories of butchery—the butchery of innocent women and children; and no doubt you thought the stories were fine: and now you too would show you are one of the race by taking revenge on a woman. But if she is only a woman, you have not conquered her yet! Oh, you will find out before long that we have law in this country, and that it is not to be outraged with impunity. You think you can do as you like; because you are a Highland master, and you have a lot of slaves round you!"

"I am going on deck now, Gerty," said he, in the same sad and gentle way, "You are tiring yourself. Shall I send Christina to you?"

For an instant she looked bewildered, as if she had not till now comprehended what was going on; and then she said, quite wildly—

"Oh, no, no, no, Keith; you don't mean what you say! You cannot mean it! You are only frightening me!—You will put me ashore—and not a word shall pass my lips. We cannot be far down the river, Keith. There are many places where you could put me ashore; and I could get back to London by rail. They won't know I have ever seen you. Keith, you will put me ashore now!"

"And if I were to put you ashore now, you would go away, Gerty, and I should never see you again—never, and never.



And what would that be for you and for me, Gerty? But you are here, no one can poison your mind; you will be a for a time; but the brighter days are coming—oh, yes, I k that: if I was not sure of that, what would become of me is a good thing to have hope; to look forward to the days; that stills the pain at the heart. And now we tw together at last, Gerty!—and if you are angry, the anger pass away; and we will go forward together to the glad da

She was listening in a sort of vague and stunned amazen Both her anger and her fear were slowly yielding to the bewi ment of the fact that she was really setting out on a vo the end of which neither she nor any one living could kno

"Ah, Gerty," said he, regarding her with a strange wistfu in the sad eyes, "you do not know what it is to me to see again. I have seen you many a time—in dreams; but were always far away; and I could not take your hand. I said to myself that you were not cruel; that you did not any one to suffer pain; and I knew if I could only see again, and take you away from these people, then your would be gentle, and you would think of the time when gave me the red rose, and we went out in the garden, an the air round us was so full of gladness that we did not s at all. Oh, yes; and I said to myself that your true fri were in the north; and what would the men at Dubh-a not do for you, and Captain Macallum, too, when they k you were coming to live at Dare; and I was thinking would be a grand day when you came to live among us; there would be dancing, and a good glass of whisky for e one, and some playing on the pipes that day! And somet I did not know whether there would be more of laughing o crying when Janet came to meet you. But I will not tro you any more now, Gerty; for you are tired I think; and I send Christina to you. And you will soon think that I not cruel to you when I took you away and saved you yourself."

She did not answer; she seemed in a sort of trance. she was aroused by the entrance of Christina, who cam directly after Macleod left. Miss White stared at this w

haired woman, as if uncertain how to address her; when she spoke it was in a friendly and persuasive way.

"You have not forgotten me, then, Christina?"

"No, mem," said the grave Highland woman: she had beautiful, clear, blue-grey eyes, but there was no pity in them.

"I suppose you have no part in this mad freak?"

The old woman seemed puzzled. She said, with a sort of serious politeness—

"I do not know, mem. I have not the good English as Hamish."

"But surely you know this," said Miss Gertrude White, with more animation, "that I am here against my will? You understand that, surely? That I am being carried away against my will from my own home and my friends? You know it very well; but perhaps your master has not told you of the risk you run? Do you know what that is? Do you think there are no laws in this country?"

"Sir Keith he is the master of the boat," said Christina. "Iss there anything now that I can do for you, mem?"

"Yes," said Miss White, boldly. "There is. You can help me to get ashore. And you will save your master from being looked on as a madman. And you will save yourselves from being hanged."

'I wass to ask you," said the old Highland woman, "when you would be for having the dinner. And Hamish, he wass saying that you will hef the dinner what time you are thinking of; and will you hef the dinner all by yourself?"

"I tell you this, woman," said Miss White, with quick anger, "that I will neither eat nor drink so long as I am on board this yacht! What is the use of such nonsense! I wish to be put on shore. I am getting tired of this folly. I tell you I want to go ashore; and I am going ashore; and it will be the worse for any one who tries to stop me."

"I think you not can go ashore, mem," Christina said, somewhat deliberately picking out her English phrases. "For the gig iss up at the davits now; and the dingay—you wass not thinking of going ashore by yourself in the dingay? And last night, mem, at a town, we had many things brought on board;

and if you wass tell me what you will hef for the dinner, is no one more willing than me. And I hope you will he: good comfort on board the yacht."

"I can't get it into your head that you are talking nons said Miss White, angrily. "I tell you I will not go any in the yacht! And what is the use of talking to me dinner? I tell you I will neither eat nor drink while I a board this yacht."

"I think that will be a ferry foolish thing, mem," Chr said, humbly enough; but all the same the scornful fashi which this young lady had addressed her had stirred a lit the Highland woman's blood; and she added—still with apparent humility—"But if you will not eat, they say th a ferry good thing for the pride; and there iss not much left if one hass nothing to eat, mem."

"I presume that is to be my prison?" said Miss W haughtily, turning to the smart little state-room beyond companion.

"That iss your cabin, mem, if you please, mem," said C tina, who had been instructed in English politeness by husband.

"Well, now, can you understand this? Go to Sir] Macleod, and tell him that I have shut myself up in that ca and that I will speak not a word to any one; and I will ne eat nor drink, until I am taken on shore. And so, if he w to have a murder on his hands, very well! Do you under that?"

"I will say that to Sir Keith," Christina answered submissi

Miss White walked into the cabin; and locked hersel It was an apartment with which she was familiar; but v had they got the white heather? And there were books she paid little heed. They would discover they had not br her spirit yet.

On both sides the skylight overhead was open an inch; it was nearer to the tiller than the skylight of the saloon. the absolute stillness of this summer day she heard two talking. Generally, they spoke in the Gaelic, which wa course unintelligible to her; but sometimes they wandered

English—especially if the name of some English town cropped up—and thus she got hints as to the whereabouts of the *Umpire.*

"Oh, yes, it is a fine big town that town of Gravesend, to be sure, Hamish," said the one voice, "and I have no doubt, now, that it will be sending a gentleman to the Houses of Parliament in London, just as Greenock will do. But there is no one you will send from Mull. They do not know much about Mull in the Houses of Parliament!"

"And they know plenty about ferry much worse places," said Hamish proudly. "And wass you saying there will be anything so beautiful about Greenock as you will find at Tobbermorry?"

"Tobermory!" said the other. "There are some trees at Tobermory—oh, yes; and the Mish-nish and the shops——"

"Yess, and the water-fahl—do not forget the water-fahl, Colin; and there iss better whisky in Tobbermorry ass you will get in all Greenock, where they will be for mixing it with prandy and other drinks like that; and at Tobbermorry you will hef a Professor come ahl the way from Edinburgh and from Oban to gif a lecture on the Gaelic; but do you think he would gif a lecture in a town like Greenock? Oh, no; he would not do that!"

"Very well, Hamish; but it is glad I am that we are going back the way we came."

"And me, too, Colin."

"And I will not be sorry when I am in Greenock once more."

"But you will come with us first of all to Castle Dare, Colin," was the reply. "And I know that Lady Macleod herself will be for shaking hands with you, and thanking you that you wass tek the care of the yacht."

"I think I will stop at Greenock, Hamish. You know you can take her well on from Greenock. And will you go round the Mull, Hamish, or through the Crinan, do you think now?"

"Oh, I am not afrait to tek her round the Moil; but there is the English lady on board; and it will be smoother for her to go through the Crinan. And it iss ferry glad I will be, Colin, to see Ardalanish Point again; for I would rather be going through the

DD 2

Doruis Mohr twenty times ass getting petween the panks of this tamned river."

Here they relapsed into their native tongue, and she listened no longer; but at all events she had learned that they were going away to the north. And as her nerves had been somewhat shaken, she began to ask herself what further thing this madman might not do. The old stories he had told her came back with a marvellous distinctness. Would he plunge her into a dungeon and mock her with an empty cup when she was dying of thirst? Would he chain her to a rock at low water and watch the tide slowly rise? He professed great gentleness and love for her; but if the savage nature had broken out at last? Her fear grew apace. He had shown himself regardless of everything on earth: where would he stop, if she continued to repel him? And then the thought of her situation—alone; shut up in this small room; about to venture forth on the open sea with this ignorant crew—so overcame her that she hastily snatched at the bell on the dressing-table and rang it violently. Almost instantly there was a tapping at the door.

"I ask your pardon, mem," she heard Christina say.

She sprang to the door, and opened it, and caught the arm of the old woman.

"Christina, Christina," she said, almost wildly, "you won't let them take me away! My father will give you hundreds and hundreds of pounds if only you get me ashore. Just think of him—he is an old man—if you had a daughter——"

Miss White was acting very well indeed; though she was more concerned about herself than her father.

"I wass to say to you," Christina explained with some difficulty, "that if you wass saying that, Sir Keith had a message sent away to your father, and you wass not to think any more about that. And now, mem, I cannot tek you ashore; it iss no business I hef with that; and I could not go ashore myself whateffer; but I would get you some dinner, mem."

"Then I suppose you don't understand the English language!" Miss White exclaimed, angrily. "I tell you I will neither eat nor drink so long as I am on board this yacht. Go and tell Sir Keith Macleod what I have said!"

So Miss White was left alone again; and the slow time passed; and she heard the murmured conversation of the men; and also a measured pacing to and fro which she took to be the step of Macleod. Quick rushes of feeling went through her—indignation; a stubborn obstinacy; a wonder over the audacity of this thing; malevolent hatred even; but all these were being gradually subdued by the dominant claim of hunger. Miss White had acted the part of many heroines; but she was not herself a heroine—if there is anything heroic in starvation. It was growing to dusk when she again summoned the old Highland woman.

"Get me something to eat," said she; "I cannot die like a rat in a hole."

"Yes, mem," said Christina, in the most matter-of-fact way—for she had never been in a theatre in her life, and she had not imagined that Miss White's threat meant anything at all. "The dinner is just ready now, mem; and if you will hef it in the saloon, there will be no one there; that wass Sir Keith's message to you."

"I will not have it in the saloon; I will have it here."

"Ferry well, mem," Christina said, submissively. "But you will go into the saloon, mem, when I will mek the bed for you, and the lamp will hef to be lit, but Hamish he will light the lamp for you. And is there any other things you wass thinking of that you would like, mem?"

"No; I want something to eat."

"And Hamish, mem, he wass saying I will ask you whether you will hef the claret-wine, or—or—the other wine, mem, that meks a noise——"

"Bring me some water. But the whole of you will pay dearly for this!"

"I ask your pardon, mem?" said Christina, with great respect.

"Oh, go away, and get me something to eat."

And in fact Miss White made a very good dinner, though the things had to be placed before her on her dressing-table. And her rage and indignation did not prevent her having, after all, a glass or two of the claret-wine. And then she permitted

Hamish to come in and light the swinging-lamp; and ther Christina made up one of the two narrow beds. Miss \ was left alone.

Many a hundred times had she been placed in great peri the stage; and she knew that on such occasions it had bee duty to clasp her hand on her forehead and set to work tc out how to extricate herself. Well, on this occasion, she di make use of any dramatic gesture; but she turned out the l and threw herself on the top of the narrow little bed; anc determined that, before they got her conveyed to their s home in the north, she would make one more effort fo freedom. Then she heard the man at the helm begin to hı himself "*Fhir a bhata, na horo eile.*" The night dark And soon all the wild emotions of the day were forgotten she was asleep.

* * * * *

Asleep—in the very waters through which she had with her lover on the white summer day. But *Rose-leaf— leaf—what faint wind will carry you* NOW *to the south?*

CHAPTER XLV.

THE VOYAGE OVER.

AND now the brave old *Umpire* is nearing her northern once more; and surely this is a right royal evening fo reception of her. What although the sun has just gone (and the sea around them become a plain of heaving and ling blue-black waves? Far away, in that purple-black se long promontories that are of a still pale rose-colour; an western sky is a blaze of golden-green; and they know tha wild, beautiful radiance is still touching the wan walls of (Dare. And there is Ardalanish Point; and that the ruddy of Mull; and there will be a good tide in the Sound of

Why, then, do they linger, and keep the old *Umpire* with her sails flapping idly in the wind?

As you pass through Jura's Sound
Bend your course by Scarba's shore;
Shun, O shun, the gulf profound
Where Corrievreckan's surges roar!

They are in no danger of Corrievreckan now; they are in familiar waters; only that is another Colonsay that lies away there in the south. Keith Macleod, seated up at the bow, is calmly regarding it. He is quite alone. There is no sound around him but the lapping of the waves.

And ever as the year returns,
The charm-bound sailors know the day;
For sadly still the Mermaid mourns
The lovely chief of Colonsay.

And is he listening now for the wild sound of her singing? Or is he thinking of the brave Macphail who went back after seven long months of absence, and found the maid of Colonsay still true to him? The ruby ring she had given him had never paled. There was one woman who could remain true to her absent lover.

Hamish came forward.

"Will we go on now, sir?" said he, in the Gaelic.

"No."

Hamish looked round. The shining clear evening looked very calm, notwithstanding the tossing of the blue-black waves. And it seemed wasteful to the old sailor to keep the yacht lying-to or aimlessly sailing this way and that while this favourable wind remained to them.

"I am not sure that the breeze will last, Sir Keith."

"Are you sure of anything, Hamish?" Macleod said, quite absently. "Well, there is one thing we can all make sure of. But I have told you, Hamish, I am not going up the Sound of Iona in daylight: why, there is not a man in all the islands who would not know of our coming by to-morrow morning. We will go up the Sound as soon as it is dark. It is a new moon to-night. And I think we can go without lights, Hamish."

"The *Dunara* is coming south to-night, Sir Keith," th
man said.

"Why, Hamish, you seem to have lost all your cour
soon as you put Colin Laing ashore."

"Colin Laing! Is it Colin Laing!" exclaimed Ha
indignantly. "I will know how to sail this yacht, and
know the banks, and the tides, and the rocks better tha
fifteen thousands of Colin Laings!"

"And what if the *Dunara* is coming south? If she cann
us, we can see her."

But whether it was that Colin Laing had before leavi
yacht managed to convey to Hamish some notion of the ri
was running, or whether it was that he was merely anxio
his master's safety, it was clear that Hamish was far from sat
He opened and shut his big clasp knife in an awkward si
Then he said—

"You will not go to Castle Dare, Sir Keith?"

Macleod started; he had forgotten that Hamish was the

"No. I have told you where I am going."

"But there is not any good anchorage at that island, sir
protested. "Have I not been round every bay of it; and yo
Sir Keith; and you know there is not an inch of sand or of
but only the small loose stones. And then the shepherd
left there all by himself; it was mad he became at last, and
his own life too."

"Well, do you expect to see his ghost?" Macleod
"Come, Hamish, you have lost your nerve in the south. S
you are not afraid of being anywhere in the old yacht, so lo
she has good sea-room around her?"

"And if you are not wishing to go up the Sound of Iona i
daylight, Sir Keith," Hamish said, still clinging to the
"we could bear a little to the south, and go round the outs
Iona."

"The Dubh-artach men would recognize the *Umpire*, at
Macleod said, abruptly; and then he suggested to Hamis
he should get a little more way on the yacht, so that she
be a trifle steadier when Christina carried the dinner int
English lady's cabin. But indeed there was now little bre

any kind. Hamish's fears of a dead calm were likely to prove true.

Meanwhile another conversation had been going forward in the small cabin below, that was now suffused by a beautiful warm light reflected from the evening sky. Miss White was looking very well now, after her long sea voyage. During their first few hours in blue water she had been very ill indeed; and she repeatedly called on Christina to allow her to die. The old Highlandwoman came to the conclusion that English ladies were rather childish in their ways; but the only answer she made to this reiterated prayer was to make Miss White as comfortable as was possible, and to administer such restoratives as she thought desirable. At length, when recovery and a sound appetite set in, the patient began to show a great friendship for Christina. There was no longer any theatrical warning of the awful fate in store for everybody connected with this enterprise. She tried rather to enlist the old woman's sympathies on her behalf, and if she did not very well succeed in that direction, at least she remained on friendly terms with Christina, and received from her the solace of much gossip about the whereabouts and possible destination of the ship.

And on this evening Christina had an important piece of news.

"Where have we got to now, Christina?" said Miss White, quite cheerfully, when the old woman entered.

"Oh, yes, mem, we will still be off the Mull shore, but a good piece away from it, and there is not much wind, mem. But Hamish thinks we will get to the anchorage the night whateffer."

"The anchorage!" Miss White exclaimed eagerly. "Where? You are going to Castle Dare, surely?"

"No, mem, I think not," said Christina. "I think it iss an island—but you will not know the name of that island—there iss no English for it at ahl."

"But where is it? Is it near Castle Dare?"

"Oh, no, mem; it iss a good way from Castle Dare; and iss out in the sea. Do you know Gometra, mem?—was you ever going out to Gometra?"

"Yes, of course; I remember something about it anyway."

"Ah, well, it is away out past Gometra, mem; and not a good place for an anchorage whateffer; but Hamish he will know ahl the anchorages."

"What on earth is the use of going there?"

"I do not know, mem, if you please."

"Is Sir Keith going to keep me on board this boat for ever?"

"I do not know, mem."

Christina had to leave the cabin just then; when she returned she said, with some little hesitation—

"If I wass mekking so bold, mem, ass to say this to you: Why are you not asking the questions of Sir Keith himself? He will know all about it; and if you were to come into the saloon, mem——"

"Do you think I would enter into any communication with him after his treatment of me?" said Miss White, indignantly. "No; let him atone for that first. When he has set me at liberty, then I will speak with him; but never so long as he keeps me shut up like a convict."

"I wass only saying, mem," Christina answered, with great respect, "that if you were wishing to know where we were going, Sir Keith will know that; but how can I know it? And you know, mem, Sir Keith has not shut you up in this cabin: you hef the saloon, if you would please to hef it."

"Thank you, I know!" rejoined Miss White. "If I choose, my jail may consist of two rooms instead of one. I don't appreciate that amount of liberty. I want to be set ashore."

"That I hef nothing to do with, mem," Christina said humbly, proceeding with her work.

Miss White, being left to think over these things, was beginning to believe that, after all, her obduracy was not likely to be of much service to her. Would it not be wiser to treat with the enemy: perhaps to outwit him by a show of forgiveness? Here they were approaching the end of the voyage—at least, Christina seemed to intimate as much; and if they were not exactly within call of friends, they would surely be within rowing distance of some inhabited island, even Gometra, for example. And if only a message could be sent to Castle Dare? Lady Macleod and Janet Macleod were women. They would not

countenance this monstrous thing. If she could only reach them, she would be safe.

The rose-pink died away from the long promontories, and was succeeded by a sombre grey; the glory in the west sank down; a wan twilight came over the sea and the sky; and a small golden star—like the point of a needle—told where the Dubh-artach men had lit their beacon for the coming night. The *Umpire* lay and idly rolled in this dead calm; Macleod paced up and down the deck, in the solemn stillness; Hamish threw a tarpaulin over the skylight of the saloon, to cover the bewildering light from below; and then, as the time went slowly by, darkness came over the land and the sea. They were alone with the night, and the lapping waves, and the stars.

About ten o'clock there was a loud rattling of blocks and cordage—the first puff of a coming breeze had struck her. The men were at their posts in a moment; there were a few sharp, quick orders from Hamish; and presently the old *Umpire*, with her great boom away over her quarter, was running free before a light south-easterly wind.

"Ay, ay!" said Hamish, in sudden gladness, "we will soon be by Ardalanish Point with a fine wind like this, Sir Keith; and if you would rather hef no lights on her—well, it is a clear night whateffer; and the *Dunara* she will hef up her lights."

The wind came in bits of squalls, it is true; but the sky overhead remained clear; and the *Umpire* bowled merrily along. Macleod was still on deck. They rounded the Ross of Mull; and got into the smoother waters of the Sound: would any of the people in the cottages at Erraidh see this grey ghost of a vessel go gliding past over the dark water? Behind them burned the yellow eye of Dubh-artach; before them a few small red points told them of the Iona cottages; and still this phantom grey vessel held on her way. The *Umpire* was nearing her last anchorage.

And still she steals onward, like a thief in the night. She has passed through the Sound; she is in the open sea again; there is a calling of startled birds from over the dark bosom of the deep. Then far away they watch the lights of a steamer;

but she is miles from their course; they cannot even hear the throb of her engines.

It is another sound they hear—a low booming as of distant thunder. And that black thing away on their right—scarcely visible over the darkened waves—is that the channelled and seabird-haunted Staffa, trembling through all her caves under the shock of the smooth Atlantic surge? For despite of the clearness of the starlit sky, there is a wild booming of waters all around her rocks; and the giant caverns answer; and the thunder shudders out to the listening sea.

The night drags on. The Dutchman is fast asleep in his vast Atlantic bed; the dull roar of the waves he has heard for millions of years is not likely to awake him. And Fladda, and Lunga: surely this ghost-grey ship that steals towards them is not the old *Umpire* that used to visit them in the gay summer-time, with her red ensign flying, and the blue seas all around her? But here is a dark object on the waters that is growing larger and larger as one approaches it. The black outline of it is becoming sharp against the clear dome of stars. There is a gloom around as one gets nearer and nearer the bays and cliffs of this lonely island; and now one hears the sound of breakers on the rocks. Hamish and his men are on the alert. The topsail has been lowered. The heavy chain of the anchor lies ready by the windlass. And then, as the *Umpire* glides into smooth water, and her head is brought round to the light breeze, away goes the anchor with a rattle that awakes a thousand echoes; and all the startled birds among the rocks are calling through the night,—the sea-pyots screaming shrilly, the curlews uttering their warning note, the herons croaking as they wing their slow flight away across the sea. The *Umpire* has got to her anchorage at last.

And scarcely was the anchor down when they brought him a message from the English lady. She was in the saloon, and wished to see him. He could scarcely believe this; for it was now past midnight; and she had never come into the saloon before. But he went down through the forecastle; and through his own state-room; and opened the door of the saloon.

For a second the strong light almost blinded him; but at all events he knew she was sitting there; and that she was regard-

ing him with no fierce indignation at all, but with quite a friendly look.

"Gertrude!" said he, in wonder; but he did not approach her. He stood before her as one who was submissive.

"So we have got to land at last," said she: and more and more he wondered to hear the friendliness of her voice. Could it be true then? Or was it only one of those visions that had of late been torturing his brain?

"Oh, yes, Gerty!" said he. "We have got to an anchorage."

"I thought I would sit up for it," said she. "Christina said we should get to land some time to-night; and I thought I would like to see you. Because you know, Keith, you have used me very badly. And won't you sit down?"

He accepted that invitation. *Could it be true? could it be true?* This was ringing in his ears. He heard her only in a bewildered way.

"And I want you to tell me what you mean to do with me," said she, frankly and graciously; "I am at your mercy, Keith."

"Oh, not that—not that," said he; and he added, sadly enough, "it is I who have been at your mercy since ever I saw you, Gerty; and it is for you to say what is to become of you and of me. And have you got over your anger now?—and will you think of all that made me do this, and try to forgive it for the sake of my love for you, Gerty? Is there any chance of that now?"

She rather avoided the earnest gaze that was bent on her. She did not notice how nervously his hand gripped the edge of the table near him.

"Well, it is a good deal to forgive, Keith; you will acknowledge that yourself; and though you used to think that I was ready to sacrifice everything for fame, I did not expect you would make me a nine-days' wonder in this way. I suppose the whole thing is in the papers now?"

"Oh, no, Gerty; I sent a message to your father."

"Well, that was kind of you. And audacious. Were you not afraid of his overtaking you? The *Umpire* is not the swiftest of sailers, you used to say; and you know there are telegraphs and railways to all the ports."

"He did not know you were in the *Umpire*, Gerty. But of course, if he were very anxious about you, he would write or come to Dare. I should not be surprised if he were there now."

A quick look of surprise and gladness sprang to her face.

"Papa—at Castle Dare!" she exclaimed. "And Christina says it is not far from here."

"Not many miles away."

"Then, of course, they will know we are here in the morning?" she cried, in the indiscretion of sudden joy. "And they will come out for me."

"Oh, no, Gerty, they will not come out for you. No human being but those on board knows that we are here. Do you think they could see you from Dare? And there is no one living now on the island. We are alone in the sea."

The light died away from her face; but she said, cheerfully enough—

"Well, I am at your mercy then, Keith. Let us take it that way. Now you must tell me what part in the comedy you mean me to play; for the life of me I can't make it out."

"Oh, Gerty, Gerty, do not speak like that!" he exclaimed. "You are breaking my heart. Is there none of the old love left? Is it all a matter for jesting?"

She saw she had been incautious.

"Well," said she, gently, "I was wrong; I know it is more serious than that; and I am not indisposed to forgive you, if you treat me fairly. I know you have great earnestness of nature; and—and you were very fond of me; and although you have risked a great deal in what you have done, still, men who are very deeply in love don't think much about consequences. And if I were to forgive you, and make friends again, what then?"

"And if we were as we used to be," said he, with a grave wistfulness in his face, "do you not think I would gladly take you ashore, Gerty?"

"And to Castle Dare?"

"Oh, yes, to Castle Dare! Would not my mother and Janet be glad to welcome you!"

"And papa may be there?"

"If he is not there, can we not telegraph for him? Why, Gerty, surely you would not be married anywhere but in the Highlands?"

At the mention of marriage she blanched somewhat; but she had nerved herself to play this part.

"Then, Keith," said she, gallantly, "I will make you a promise. Take me to Castle Dare to-morrow, and the moment I am within its doors, I will shake hands with you, and forgive you, and we will be friends again as in the old days."

"We were more than friends, Gerty," said he, in a low voice.

"Let us be friends first, and then who knows what may not follow?" said she, brightly. "You cannot expect me to be over-profuse in affection just after being shut up like this?"

"Gerty," said he, and he looked at her with those strangely tired eyes, and there was a great gentleness in his voice, "do you know where you are? You are close to the island that I told you of—where I wish to have my grave, on the cliff. But instead of a grave, would it not be a fine thing to have a marriage here? No, do not be alarmed, Gerty! it is only with your own good will; and surely your heart will consent at last! Would not that be a strange wedding, too; with the minister from Salen; and your father on board; and the people from Dare? Oh, you would see such a number of boats come out that day, and we would go proudly back; and do you not think there would be a great rejoicing that day? Then all our troubles would be at an end, Gerty! There would be no more fear; and the theatres would never see you again; and the long, happy life we should lead, we two together! And do you know the first thing I would get you, Gerty?—it would be a new yacht! I would go to the Clyde, and have it built all for you. I would not have you go out again in this yacht, for you would then remember the days in which I was cruel to you; but in a new yacht you would not remember that any more; and do you not think we would have many a pleasant, long summer day on the deck of her; and only ourselves, Gerty! And you would sing the songs I first heard you sing, and I think the sailors would imagine they heard the singing of the mermaid of Colonsay, for

there is no one can sing as you sing, Gerty. I think it wa
first took away my heart from me."

"But we can talk about all these things when I am on
again," said she, coldly. "You cannot expect me to be
favourably disposed so long as I am shut up here."

"But then," he said, "if you were on shore you mig
away again from me, Gerty! The people would get at yo
again; they would whisper things to you; you would
about theatres again. I have saved you, sweetheart; can
you go back?"

The words were spoken with an eager affection and year
but they sank into her mind with a dull and cold
viction that there was no escape for her through any v
artifice.

"Am I to understand, then?" said she, "that you me
keep me a prisoner here until I marry you?"

"Why do you speak like that, Gerty?"

"I demand an answer to my question."

"I have risked everything to save you; can I let y
back?"

A sudden flash of desperate anger—even of hatred—v
her eyes; her fine piece of acting had been of no avail.

"Well, let the farce end!" said she, with frowning eyel
"Before I came on board this yacht I had some pity for yc
thought you were at least a man, and had a man's gener
Now I find you a coward, and a tyrant——"

"Gerty!"

"Oh, do not think you have frightened me with your s
of the revenge of your miserable chiefs, and their savage s
Not a bit of it! Do with me what you like; I woul
marry you if you gave me a hundred yachts!"

"Gerty!"

The anguish of his face was growing wild with despair.

"I say, let the farce end! I had pity for you—yes I
Now—I hate you!"

He sprang up with a quick cry, as of one shot throug
heart. He regarded her, in a bewildered manner, for one
second; and then he gently said, "Good night, Gerty!

forgive you!" and he staggered backwards, and got out of the saloon, leaving her alone.

See! the night is still fine. All around this solitary bay there is a wall of rock, jet black, against the clear, dark sky, with its myriad twinkling stars. The new moon has arisen; but it sheds but little radiance yet down there in the south. There is a sharper gleam from one lambent planet—a thin line of golden-yellow light that comes all the way across from the black rocks until it breaks in flashes among the ripples close to the side of the yacht. Silence once more reigns around; only from time to time one hears the croak of a heron from the dusky shore.

What can keep this man up so late on deck? There is nothing to look at but the great bows of the yacht black against the pale grey sea; and the tall spars and the rigging going away up into the starlit sky; and the suffused glow from the skylight touching a yellow-grey on the boom. There is no need for the anchor-watch that Hamish has been talking about. The equinoctials are not likely to begin on such a calm night as this.

He is looking across the lapping grey water to the jet black line of cliff. And there are certain words haunting him. He cannot forget them. He cannot put them away.

* * * * * *

WHEREFORE IS LIGHT GIVEN TO HIM THAT IS IN MISERY, AND LIFE UNTO THE BITTER IN SOUL? * * * WHICH LONG FOR DEATH, BUT IT COMETH NOT; AND DIG FOR IT MORE THAN FOR HIDDEN TREASURES. * * * WHICH REJOICE EXCEEDINGLY, AND ARE GLAD WHEN THEY CAN FIND THE GRAVE.

* * * * * *

Then in the stillness of the night, he heard a breathing. He went forward; and found that Hamish had secreted himself behind the windlass. He uttered some exclamation in the Gaelic; and the old man rose and stood guiltily before him. "Have I not told you to go below before; and will I have to throw you down into the forecastle?"

The old man stood irresolute for a moment. Then he said, also in his native tongue:

"You should not speak like that to me, Sir Keith: I have known you many a year."

Macleod caught Hamish's hand.

"I beg your pardon, Hamish. You do not know. It is a sore heart I have this night."

"Oh, God help us! Do I not know that!" he exclaimed, in a broken voice; and Macleod, as he turned away, could hear the old man crying bitterly in the dark. What else could Hamish do now—for him who had been to him as the son of his old age?

"Go below now, Hamish," said Macleod in a gentle voice; and the old man reluctantly obeyed.

But the night had not drawn to day when Macleod again went forward and said, in a strange, excited whisper—

"Hamish, Hamish, are you awake now?"

Instantly the old man appeared: he had not turned into his berth at all.

"Hamish, Hamish, do you hear the sound?" Macleod said, in the same wild way, "do you not hear the sound?"

"What sound, Sir Keith?" said he—for indeed there was nothing but the lapping of the water along the side of the yacht and a murmur of ripples along the shore.

"Do you not hear it, Hamish? It is a sound as of a brass band!—a brass band playing music—as if it was in a theatre. Can you not hear it, Hamish?"

"Oh, God help us! God help us!" Hamish cried.

"You do not hear it, Hamish?" he said. "Ah, it is some mistake. I beg your pardon for calling you, Hamish: now you will go below again."

"Oh, no, Sir Keith," said Hamish. "Will I not stay on deck now till the morning? It is a fine sleep I have had. Oh, yes, I had a fine sleep. And how is one to know when the equinoctials may not come on?"

"I wish you to go below, Hamish."

And now this sound that is ringing in his ears is no longer of the brass band that he had heard in the theatre. It is quite different. It has all the ghastly mirth of the song that Norman

Ogilvie used to sing in the old, half-forgotten days. What is it that he hears?

* * * *

King Death was a rare old fellow,
He sate where no sun could shine;
And he lifted his hand so yellow,
And poured out his coal-black wine!
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! for the coal-black wine!

It is a strange mirth. It might almost make a man laugh. For do we not laugh gently when we bury a young child, and put the flowers over it; and know that it is at peace? The child has no more pain at the heart. Oh, Norman Ogilvie, are you still singing the wild song; and are you laughing now?—or is it the old man Hamish that is crying in the dark?

* * * *

There came to him many a maiden,
Whose eyes had forgot to shine;
And widows with grief o'erladen,
For a draught of his sleepy wine.
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! for the coal-black wine!

It is such a fine thing to sleep—when one has been fretting all the night, and spasms of fire go through the brain! Ogilvie, Ogilvie, do you remember the laughing Duchess? do you think she would laugh over one's grave? Or put her foot on it, and stand relentless, with anger in her eyes? That is a sad thing; but after it is over there is sleep.

* * * *

All came to the rare old fellow,
Who laughed till his eyes dropped brine,
As he gave them his hand so yellow,
And pledged them, in Death's black wine!
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! for the coal-black wine!

Hamish!—Hamish!—will you not keep her away from me? I have told Donald what pibroch he will play; I want to be at peace now. But the brass band—the brass band—I can hear the blare of the trumpets; and Ulva will know that we are here,

and the Gometra men, and the sea-birds too, that I used to love. But she has killed all that now, and she stands on my grave. She will laugh; for she was light-hearted; like a young child. But you, Hamish, you will find the quiet grave for me; and Donald will play the pibroch for me that I told him of; and you will say no word to her of all that is over and gone.

* * * * *

See — he sleeps. This haggard-faced man is stretched on the deck; and the pale dawn, arising in the east, looks at him; and does not revive him, but makes him whiter still. You might almost think he was dead. But Hamish knows better than that; for the old man comes stealthily forward; and he has a great tartan plaid in his hands; and very gently indeed he puts it over his young master. And there are tears running down Hamish's face; and he says, "The brave lad! The brave lad!"

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE END.

"DUNCAN," said Hamish, in a low whisper—for Macleod had gone below, and they thought he might be asleep in the small, hushed state-room—"this is a strange-looking day, is it not? And I am afraid of it in this open bay, with an anchorage no better than a sheet of paper for an anchorage. Do you see now, how strange-looking it is?"

Duncan Cameron also spoke in his native tongue; and he said—

"That is true, Hamish. And it was a day like this there was when the *Solan* was sunk at her moorings in Loch Hourn. Do you remember, Hamish? And it would be better for us now if we were in Loch Tua, or Loch na Keal, or in the dock that was built for the steamer at Tiree. I do not like the look of this day."

Yet to an ordinary observer it would have seemed that the

chief characteristic of this pale, still day was extreme and settled calm. There was not a breath of wind to ruffle the surface of the sea; but there was a slight, glassy swell; and that only served to show curious opalescent tints under the suffused light of the sun. There were no clouds; there was only a thin veil of faint and sultry mist all across the sky; the sun was invisible, but there was a glare of yellow at one point of the heavens. A dead calm; but heavy, oppressed, sultry. There was something in the atmosphere that seemed to weigh on the chest.

"There was a dream I had this morning," continued Hamish, in the same low tones. "It was about my little granddaughter Christina. You know my little Christina, Duncan. And she said to me: 'What have you done with Sir Keith Macleod? Why have you not brought him back? He was under your care, grandfather.' I did not like that dream."

"Oh, you are becoming as bad as Sir Keith Macleod himself!" said the other. "He does not sleep. He talks to himself. You will become like that if you pay attention to foolish dreams, Hamish."

Hamish's quick temper leapt up.

"What do you mean, Duncan Cameron, by saying 'as bad as Sir Keith Macleod'? You—you come from Ross: perhaps they have not good masters there. I tell you there is not any man in Ross, or in Sutherland either, is as good a master, and as brave a lad, as Sir Keith Macleod—not any one, Duncan Cameron!"

"I did not mean anything like that, Hamish," said the other humbly. "But there was a breeze this morning. We could have got over to Loch Tua. Why did we stay here, where there is no shelter, and no anchorage? Do you know what is likely to come after a day like this?"

"It is your business to be a sailor on board this yacht; it is not your business to say where she will go," said Hamish.

But all the same the old man was becoming more and more alarmed at the ugly aspect of this dead calm. The very birds, instead of stalking among the still pools, or lying buoyant on the smooth waters, were excitedly calling, and whirring from one point to another.

"If the equinoctials were to begin now," said Duncan Cameron, "this is a fine place to meet the equinoctials! An open bay, without shelter; and a ground that is no ground for an anchorage. It is not two anchors or twenty anchors would hold in such a ground; and there are rocks all round us that would put the *Clansman* herself to pieces in a moment."

Macleod appeared: the men were suddenly silent. Without a word to either of them—and that was not his wont—he passed to the stern of the yacht. Hamish knew from his manner that he would not be spoken to. He did not follow him, even with all this vague dread on his mind.

The day wore on to the afternoon. Macleod, who had been pacing up and down the deck, suddenly called Hamish. Hamish came aft at once.

"Hamish," said he, with a strange sort of laugh, "do you remember this morning, before the light came? Do you remember that I asked you about a brass band that I heard playing?"

Hamish looked at him; and said with an earnest anxiety—

"Oh, Sir Keith, you will pay no heed to that! It is very common. I have heard them say it is very common. Why, to hear a brass band, to be sure! There is nothing more common than that. And you will not think you are unwell merely because you think you can hear a brass band playing!"

"I want you to tell me, Hamish," said he, in the same jesting way, "whether my eyes have followed the example of my ears, and are playing tricks. Do you think they are bloodshot, with my lying on deck in the cold? Hamish, what do you see all around?"

The old man looked at the sky, and the shore, and the sea. It was a marvellous thing. The world was all enshrouded in a salmon-coloured mist: there was no line of horizon visible between the sea and the sky.

"It is red, Sir Keith," said Hamish.

"Ah! Am I in my senses this time? And what do you think of a red day, Hamish? That is not a usual thing."

"Oh, Sir Keith, it will be a wild night this night! And we cannot stay here, with this bad anchorage!"

"And where would you go, Hamish—in a dead calm?" Macleod asked, still with a smile on the wan face.

"Where would I go?" said the old man, excitedly. "I—I will take care of the yacht. But you, Sir Keith; oh! you—you will go ashore now. Do you know, sir, the sheiling that the shepherd had? It is a poor place; oh, yes; but Duncan Cameron and I will take some things ashore. And do you not think we can look after the yacht? She has met the equinoctials before, if it is the equinoctials that are beginning. She has met them before; and cannot she meet them now? But you, Sir Keith, you will go ashore!"

Macleod burst out laughing, in an odd sort of way.

"Do you think I am good at running away when there is any kind of danger, Hamish? Have you got into the English belief? Would you call me a coward, too? Nonsense, nonsense, nonsense, Hamish!—I—why, I am going to drink a glass of the coal-black wine, and have done with it. I will drink it to the health of my sweetheart, Hamish!"

"Sir Keith," said the old man, beginning to tremble, though he but half understood the meaning of this scornful mirth, "I have had charge of you since you were a young lad."

"Very well!"

"And Lady Macleod will ask of me, 'Such and such a thing happened: what did you do for my son?' Then I will say, 'Your Ladyship, we were afraid of the equinoctials; and we got Sir Keith to go ashore; and when the gale was over we went ashore for him; and now we have brought him back to Castle Dare!'"

"Hamish, Hamish, you are laughing at me! Or you want to call me a coward? Don't you know I should be afraid of the ghost of the shepherd who killed himself? Don't you know that the English people call me a coward?"

"May their souls dwell in the downmost hall of perdition!" said Hamish, with his cheeks become a grey-white; "and every woman that ever came of the accursed race!"

Macleod looked at the old man for a second; and he gripped his hand.

"Do not say that, Hamish—that is folly. But you have been

my friend. My mother will not forget you—it is not the way of a Macleod to forget—whatever happens to me."

"Sir Keith!" Hamish cried, "I do not know what you mean. But you will go ashore before the night!"

"Go ashore?" Macleod answered, with a return to the wild, bantering tone, "when I am going to see my sweetheart? Oh, no! Tell Christina, now! Tell Christina to ask the young English lady to come into the saloon, for I have something to say to her. Be quick, Hamish!"

Hamish went away; and before long he returned with the answer that the young English lady was in the saloon. And now he was no longer haggard and piteous; but joyful; and there was a strange light in his eyes.

"Sweetheart," said he, "are you waiting for me at last? I have brought you a long way. Shall we drink a glass together now at the end of the voyage?"

"Do you wish to insult me?" said she; but there was no anger in her voice: there was more of fear in her eyes, as she regarded him.

"You have no other message for me than the one you gave me last night, Gerty?" said he, almost cheerfully. "It is all over then? You would go away from me for ever? But we will drink a glass before we go!"

He sprang forward, and caught both her hands in his with the grip of a vice.

"Do you know what you have done, Gerty?" said he, in a low voice. "Oh, you have soft, smooth, English ways; and you are like a rose-leaf; and you are like a queen, whom all people are glad to serve. But do you know that you have killed a man's life? There is no penalty for that in the south, perhaps; but you are no longer in the south. And if you have this very night to drink a glass with me, you will not refuse it? It is only a glass of the coal-black wine!"

She struggled back from him; for there was a look in his face that frightened her. But she had a wonderful self-command.

"Is that the message I was to hear?" said she, coldly.

"Why, sweetheart, are you not glad? Is not that the only gladness left for you and for me, that we should drink one glass

together, and clasp hands, and say good-bye? What else is there left? What else could come to you and me? And it may not be this night, or to-morrow night; but one night soon I think it will come; and then, sweetheart, we will have one more glass together, before the end?"

He went on deck. He called Hamish.

"Hamish," said he, in a grave, matter-of-fact way, "I don't like the look of this evening. Did you say the sheiling was still on the island?"

"Oh, yes, Sir Keith," said Hamish, with great joy, for he thought his advice was about to be taken after all.

"Well, now, you know the gales, when they begin, sometimes last for two, or three, or four days; and I will ask you to see that Christina takes a good store of things to the sheiling, before the darkness comes on. Take plenty of things now, Hamish, and put them in the sheiling, for I am afraid this is going to be a wild night."

All the red light had gone away; and as the sun went down, there was nothing but a spectral whiteness over the sea and the sky. And the atmosphere was so close and sultry that it seemed to suffocate one. Moreover, there was a dead calm; if they had wanted to get away from this exposed place, how could they? They could not get into the gig and pull this great yacht over to Loch-na-Keal.

It was with a light heart that Hamish set about this thing; and Christina forthwith filled a hamper with tinned meats, and bread, and whisky, and what not. And fuel was taken ashore, too; and candles, and a store of matches. If the gales were coming on, as appeared likely from this ominous-looking evening, who could tell how many days and nights the young master —and the English lady, too, if he desired her company—might not have to stay ashore, while the men took the chance of the sea with the yacht, or perhaps seized the occasion of a lull to make for some place of shelter? There was Loch Tua; and there was the bay at Bunessan; and there was the little channel called Polterriv, behind the rocks opposite Iona. Any shelter at all was better than this exposed place, with the treacherous anchorage.

Hamish and Duncan Cameron returned to the yacht.

"Will you go ashore now, Sir Keith," the old man said.

"Oh, no; I am not going ashore yet. It is not yet time to run away, Hamish."

He spoke in a friendly and pleasant fashion, though Hamish, in his increasing alarm, thought it no proper time for jesting. They hauled the gig up to the davits, however, and again the yacht lay in dead silence in this little bay.

The evening grew to dusk; the only change visible in the spectral world of pale yellow-white mist was the appearance in the sky of a number of small, detached, bulbous-looking clouds of a dusky blue-grey. They had not drifted hither, for there was no wind. They had only appeared. They were absolutely motionless.

But the heat and the suffocation in this atmosphere became almost insupportable. The men, with bare heads, and jerseys unbuttoned at the neck, were continually going to the cask of fresh water beside the windlass. Nor was there any change when the night came on. If anything, the night was hotter than the evening had been. They awaited in silence what might come of this ominous calm.

Hamish came aft.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Keith," said he, "but I have put up the side-lights, in case there is a chance of our getting away; and I am thinking we will have an anchor-watch to-night."

"You will have no anchor-watch to-night," Macleod answered slowly, from out of the darkness. "I will be all the anchor-watch you will need, Hamish, until the morning."

"You, sir!" Hamish cried. "I have been waiting to take you ashore! and surely it is ashore that you are going!"

Just as he had spoken there was a sudden sound that all the world seemed to stand still to hear. It was a low, murmuring sound of thunder; but it was so remote as almost to be inaudible. The next moment an awful thing occurred. The two men standing face to face in the dark suddenly found themselves in a blaze of blinding steel-blue light; and at the very same instant the thunder-roar crackled and shook all around them like the firing of a thousand cannon. How the wild echoes went booming

over the sea! Then they were in the black night again. There was a period of awed silence.

"Hamish," Macleod said, quickly, "do as I tell you now! Lower the gig; take the men with you, and Christina; and go ashore and remain in the sheiling till the morning."

"I will not!" Hamish cried. "Oh, Sir Keith, would you have me do that!"

Macleod had anticipated his refusal. Instantly he went forward and called up Christina. He ordered Duncan Cameron and John Cameron to lower away the gig. He got them all in but Hamish.

"Hamish," said he, "you are a smaller man than I. Is it on such a night that you would have me quarrel with you? Must I throw you into the boat?"

The old man clasped his trembling hands together as if in prayer; and he said,—with an agonized and broken voice—

"Oh, Sir Keith, you are my master, and there is nothing I will not do for you; but only this one night you will let me remain with the yacht. I will give you the rest of my life; but only this one night——"

"Into the gig with you!" Macleod cried, angrily. "Why, man, don't you think I can keep anchor-watch?" But then he added, very gently, "Hamish, shake hands with me now. You were my friend; and you must get ashore before the sea rises."

"I will stay in the dingay, then;" the old man entreated.

"You will go ashore, Hamish; and this very instant, too. If the gale begins, how will you get ashore? Good-bye, Hamish—*good night*."

Another blue-white sheet of flame quivered all around them, just as this black figure was descending into the gig; and then the fierce hell of sounds broke loose once more. Land and sky together seemed to shudder at the wild uproar; and far away the sounds went thundering through the hollow night. How could one hear if there was any sobbing in that departing boat—or any last cry of farewell? It was Ulva calling now; and Fladda answering from over the black water; and the Dutchman is surely awake at last!

There came a stirring of wind—from the east, and the sea

began to moan. Surely the poor fugitives must have reached the shore now? And then there was a new and strange noise in the distance; in the awful silence between the peals of thunder it could be heard; it came nearer and nearer—a low murmuring noise, but full of a secret life and thrill—it came along like the tread of a thousand armies—and then the gale struck its first blow! The yacht reeled under the stroke; then her bows staggered up again like a dog that has been felled; and after one or two convulsive plunges she clung hard at the straining cables. And now the gale was growing in fury, and the sea rising. Blinding showers of rain swept over, hissing and roaring; the blue-white tongues of flame were shooting this way and that across the startled heavens; and there was a more awful thunder than even the roar of the Atlantic booming into the great sea-caves. In the abysmal darkness the spectral arms of the ocean rose white in their angry clamour; and then another blue gleam would lay bare the great heaving and writhing bosom of the deep. What devil's dance is this? Surely it cannot be Ulva—Ulva the green-shored—Ulva that the sailors in their love of her call softly *Ool-a-va*—that is laughing aloud with wild laughter on this fearful night? And Colonsay, and Lunga, and Fladda—they were beautiful and quiet in the still summer-time; but now they have gone mad; and they are flinging back the plunging sea in white masses of foam; and they are shrieking in their fierce joy of the strife. And Staffa—Staffa is far away and alone; she is trembling to her core; how long will the shuddering caves withstand the mighty hammer of the Atlantic surge? And then again the sudden wild gleam startles the night—and one sees, with an appalling vividness, the driven white waves and the black islands—and then again a thousand echoes go booming along the iron-bound coast. What can be heard in the roar of the hurricane, and the hissing of rain, and the thundering whirl of the waves on the rocks? surely not the one glad last cry: SWEETHEART! YOUR HEALTH! YOUR HEALTH IN THE COAL-BLACK WINE!

The poor fugitives crouching in among the rocks: is it the blinding rain or the driven white surf that is in their eyes? But they have sailor's eyes; they can see through the awful



NEARING THE END.

storm; and their gaze is fixed on one small green point far out there in the blackness—the starboard light of the doomed ship. It wavers like a will-o'-the-wisp; but it does not recede; the old *Umpire* still clings bravely to her anchor cables.

And amid all the din of the storm they hear the voice of Hamish lifted aloud in lamentation:

"Oh, the brave lad! The brave lad! And who is to save my young master now; and who will carry this tale back to Castle Dare? They will say to me; 'Hamish, you had charge of the young lad; you put the first gun in his hand; you had charge of him; he had the love of a son for you: what is it you have done with him this night?' He is my Absalom; he is my brave young lad: oh, do you think that I will let him drown and do nothing to try to save him? Do you think that? Duncan Cameron: are you a man? Will you get into the gig with me and pull out to the *Umpire?*"

"By God," said Duncan Cameron, solemnly, "I will do that. I have no wife; I do not care. I will go in the gig with you, Hamish; but we will never reach the yacht—this night or any night that is to come."

Then the old woman Christina shrieked aloud; and caught her husband by the arm.

"Hamish! Hamish! Are you going to drown yourself before my eyes?"

He shook her hand away from him.

"My young master ordered me ashore: I have come ashore. But I myself I order myself back again: Duncan Cameron, they will never say that we stood by and saw Macleod of Dare go down to his grave!"

They emerged from the shelter of this great rock—the hurricane was so fierce that they had to cling to one boulder after another to save themselves from being whirled into the sea. But were these two men by themselves? Not likely! It was the whole of the crew, five men in all, who now clambered along the slippery rocks to the shingle up which they had hauled the gig; and one wild lightning-flash saw them with their hands on the gunwale, ready to drag her down to the water. There was a surf raging there that would have swamped twenty gigs: these

five men were going of their own free will and choice to certain death—so much had they loved the young master.

But a piercing cry from Christina arrested them. They looked out to sea. What was this sudden and awful thing?—instead of the starboard green light, behold! the port red light—and that moving! Oh, see! how it recedes, wavering—flickering through the whirling vapour of the storm! Is it a witch's dance; or are they strange death-fires hovering over the dark ocean-grave? But Hamish knows too well what it means; and with a wild cry of horror and despair, the old man sinks on his knees, and clasps his hands, and stretches them out to the terrible sea.

"Oh, Macleod, Macleod, are you going away from me for ever? and we will go up the hills together and on the lochs together no more—no more—no more! Oh, the brave lad that he was!—and the good master!—and who was not proud of him?—my handsome lad!—and he the last of the Macleods of Dare!"

* * * * * *

Arise, Hamish, and have the gig hauled up into shelter; for will you not want it when the gale abates, and the seas are smooth, and you have to go away to Dare, you and your comrades, with silent tongues and sombre eyes? Why this wild lamentation in the darkness of the night? The stricken heart that you loved so well has found peace at last; the coal-black wine has been drunk; there is an end. And you, you poor, cowering fugitives, who only see each other's terrified faces when the wan gleam of the lightning blazes through the sky, perhaps it is well that you should weep and wail for the young master; but that is soon over; and the fierce white day will break. And this is what I am thinking of now: when the hurricane is gone, and the seas are smooth once more, then which of you—oh, which of you all will tell this tale to the two women at Castle Dare?

So fair shines the morning sun on the white sands of Iona! The three-days' gale is over; behold! how Ulva—Ulva the

green-shored—the *Ool-a-va* that the sailors love—is laughing out again to the clear skies. And the great skarts on the shores of Erisgeir are spreading abroad their dusky wings to get them dried in the sun; and the seals are basking on the rocks in Loch-na-Keal; and in Loch Scridain the white gulls sit buoyant on the blue sea. There go the Gometra men in their brown-sailed boat to look after the lobster-traps at Staffa; and very soon you will see the steamer come round the far Cailleach Point; over at Erraidh they are signalling to the men at Dubh-artach; and they are glad to have a message from them after the heavy gale. The new, bright day has begun; the world has awakened again to the joyous sunlight; there is a chattering of the sea-birds all along the shores. It is a bright, eager, glad day for all the world. But there is silence in Castle Dare.

THE END.

Bungay:
CLAY AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS.

NOVELS

BY

WILLIAM BLACK

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF A PHAETON.

With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s*. [*Thirteenth Thousand.*

"Also, I have had it long on my mind to name the 'Adventures of a Phaeton' as a very delightful and wise book of its kind: very full of pleasant play and deep and pure feeling; much interpretation of some of the best points of German character; and, last and least, with pieces of description in it which I should be glad, selfishly, to think inferior to what the public praise in 'Modern Painters.' I can only say, they seem to *me* quite as good."—*Mr. Ruskin, in 'Fors Clavigera,' March*, 1878.

A PRINCESS OF THULE.

Crown 8vo. 6*s*. [*Fourteenth Thousand.*

"Pour goûter dans tout ce qu'elle a d'exquis l'historie des amours du peintre de Londres et de la fille des Hébrides, il faut la lire au grand air; c'est un roman d'été, et l'illusion est plus complète si l'on y peut ajouter le bruit du vent à travers les feuilles et les parfums d'une forêt ou d'un champ. Une autre condition, c'est de ne point être pressé. M. William Black ne l'est jamais. Il ne se lasse pas de promener son lecteur dans le monde inconnu qu'il a découvert, et l'on n'éprouve aucune envie de s'en plaindre, tant ces descriptions ont de charme, tant sont originales dans leur simplicité les figures qu'on y rencontre."—'*Un Romancier Ecossais,*' *Revue des Deux Mondes, October* 1, 1877.

NOVELS BY WILLIAM BLACK—

(Continued).

MADCAP VIOLET.

Crown 8vo. 6*s.* [*Eighth Thousand.*

"We take it that an indefinable confusion of moods, a swift transition from the humorous to the pathetic, is one of the signs of real literary genius, and assuredly it is very conspicuous in Mr. Black. No one shows more sympathetic delight in the brightest scenes of life and nature. No one revels more heartily in the delineation of a joyous character, or in the description of beautiful and bewitching scenery; but the broad under-vein of melancholy will crop out from time to time, and when he is being wrought up towards the most brilliant inspiration in his stories, he almost invariably inclines to become sad and sombre . . . . . And now 'Madcap Violet,' with her wild spirits and irrepressible idle independence, is made to point the moral of the vicissitudes of life, while her buoyancy is extinguished in unmitigated tragedy. We are inclined to cling to the good old tradition of the final triumph of love and virtue in the shape of brightening fortunes and a happy marriage. But if ingeniously-wrought sympathy and the excitement of an intense emotional interest are the tests of a powerful and successful novel, we place Mr. Black's 'Madcap Violet' in a very high rank indeed."—*Times.*

GREEN PASTURES AND PICCADILLY.

Crown 8vo. 6*s.* [*Seventh Thousand.*

THE MAID OF KILLEENA, and other Tales.

Crown 8vo. 6*s.* [*Fifth Thousand.*

MACMILLAN AND CO., LONDON.

BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON,
November 1878.

MACMILLAN & CO.'S CATALOGUE of Works in BELLES LETTRES, including Poetry, Fiction, etc.

Allingham.—LAURENCE BLOOMFIELD IN IRELAND; OR, THE NEW LANDLORD. By WILLIAM ALLINGHAM. New and Cheaper Issue, with a Preface. Fcap. 8vo. cloth. 4*s*. 6*d*.

An Ancient City, and other Poems.—By A NATIVE OF SURREY. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s*.

Archer.—CHRISTINA NORTH. By E. M. ARCHER. New and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Arnold. — THE POETICAL WORKS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD. Vol. I. EARLY POEMS, NARRATIVE POEMS, AND SONNETS. Vol. II. LYRIC, DRAMATIC, AND ELEGIAC POEMS. New and Complete Edition. Two Vols. Crown 8vo. Price 7*s*. 6*d*. each.

SELECTED POEMS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD. With Vignette engraved by C. H. JEENS (GOLDEN TREASURY SERIES). 18mo. 4*s*. 6*d*.

——— Large Paper Edition. Crown 8vo. 12*s*. 6*d*.

Art at Home Series.—Edited by W. J. LOFTIE, F.S.A.

"*If the whole series but continue as it has been begun—if the volumes yet to be rival these two initial—it will be beyond price as a library of household art.*"—EXAMINER.

A PLEA FOR ART IN THE HOUSE. With especial reference to the Economy of Collecting Works of Art, and the importance of Taste in Education and Morals. By W. J. LOFTIE, B.A., F.S.A. With Illustrations. Fifth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOUSE DECORATION IN PAINTING, WOODWORK, AND FURNITURE. By RHODA and AGNES GARRETT. With Illustrations. Sixth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*.

MUSIC IN THE HOUSE. By JOHN HULLAH. With Illustrations. Fourth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*.

20,000, 11, 1878. A

Art at Home Series—*continued.*

THE DRAWING ROOM; ITS DECORATIONS AND FURNITURE. By Mrs. ORRINSMITH. Illustrated. Fifth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

THE DINING ROOM. By Mrs. LOFTIE. Illustrated. Fourth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

THE BED ROOM AND BOUDOIR. By LADY BARKER. Illustrated. Fourth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

DRESS. By Mrs. OLIPHANT. Illustrated. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

PRIVATE THEATRICALS. By Lady POLLOCK. Illustrated. [*Shortly.*

[Other vols. in preparation.]

Atkinson.—AN ART TOUR TO THE NORTHERN CAPITALS OF EUROPE. By J. BEAVINGTON ATKINSON. 8vo. 12*s.*

"*We can highly recommend it; not only for the valuable information it gives on the special subjects to which it is dedicated, but also for the interesting episodes of travel which are interwoven with, ana lighten, the weightier matters of judicious and varied criticism on art and artists in northern capitals.*"—ART JOURNAL.

Atkinson (J. P.)—A WEEK AT THE LAKES, AND WHAT CAME OF IT; OR, THE ADVENTURES OF MR. DOBBS AND HIS FRIEND MR. POTTS. A Series of Sketches by J. P. ATKINSON. Oblong 4to. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Baker.—CAST UP BY THE SEA; OR, THE ADVENTURES OF NED GREY. By Sir SAMUEL BAKER, Pasha, F.R.G.S. With Illustrations by HUARD. Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo. cloth gilt. 6*s.*

"*An admirable tale of adventure, of marvellous incidents, wild exploits, and terrible dénouements.*"—DAILY NEWS. "*A story of adventure by sea and land in the good old style.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Barker (Lady).—A YEAR'S HOUSEKEEPING IN SOUTH AFRICA. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 9*s.*

"*We doubt whether in any of her previous books she has written more pleasantly than in this. . . . The great charm of these letters is that she is always natural, and tells of what she sees and hears in a strange country, just as if she were quietly chatting to her friends by their own fireside.*"—STANDARD.

Beesly.—STORIES FROM THE HISTORY OF ROME. By Mrs. BEESLY. Fcap. 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

"*A little book for which every cultivated and intelligent mother will be grateful.*"—EXAMINER.

Besant.—STUDIES IN EARLY FRENCH POETRY. By WALTER BESANT, M.A. Crown 8vo. 8*s.* 6*d.*

Betsy Lee; A FO'C'S'LE YARN. Extra fcap. 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*
"*We can at least say that it is the work of a true poet.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Black (W.)—Works by W. BLACK, Author of "A Daughter of Heth."

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF A PHAETON. Eleventh Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
"*The book is a really charming description of a thousand English landscapes and of the emergencies and the fun and the delight of a picnic journey through them by a party determined to enjoy themselves, and as well matched as the pair of horses which drew the phaeton they sat in.*"—TIMES.

A PRINCESS OF THULE. Thirteenth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
The SATURDAY REVIEW says:—"*A novel which is both romantic and natural, which has much feeling, without any touch of mawkishness, which goes deep into character without any suggestion of painful analysis—this is a rare gem to find amongst the débris of current literature, and this, or nearly this, Mr. Black has given us in the 'Princess of Thule.'*" "*A beautiful and nearly perfect story.*"—SPECTATOR.

THE MAID OF KILLEENA, and other Stories. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
"*A collection of pretty stories told in the easiest and pleasantest manner imaginable.*"—TIMES. "*It was with something akin to joy that we drew our chair closer to the fire as the weary work of the novel critic gave place to the smile of satisfaction and pleasure, when, in the very first page of our book, we discovered that we had come again to those Western Isles in the quiet summer sea in the far North, and to those simple people amidst whose loving allegiance the Princess of Thule—Sheila—held her modest Court . . . We shall not be satisfied till 'The Maid of Killeena' rests on our shelves.*"—SPECTATOR.

MADCAP VIOLET. Eighth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
"*In the very first rank of Mr. Black's heroines; proud as Sheila, and sweet as Coquette, stands Madcap Violet. The true, proud, tender nature of her, her beauty, her mischief, her self-sacrifice, endear her to the reader.*"—DAILY NEWS.

GREEN PASTURES AND PICCADILLY. Cheaper Edition. Sixth Thousand. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

MACLEOD OF DARE. With Illustrations by Eminent Artists. 3 vols. Crown 8vo. 31*s.* 6*d.*

Blackie.—THE WISE MEN OF GREECE. In a Series of Dramatic Dialogues. By J. E. BLACKIE, Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh. Crown 8vo. 9s.

Blakiston.—MODERN SOCIETY IN ITS RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL ASPECTS. By PEYTON BLAKISTON, M.D., F.R.S. Crown 8vo. 5s.

Borland Hall.—By the Author of "Olrig Grange." Cr. 8vo. 7s.

Bramston.—RALPH AND BRUNO. A Novel. By M. BRAMSTON. 2 vols. crown 8vo. 21s.

Brooke.—THE FOOL OF QUALITY; OR, THE HISTORY OF HENRY, EARL OF MORELAND. By HENRY BROOKE. Newly revised, with a Biographical Preface by the Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY, M.A., Rector of Eversley. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Buist.—BIRDS, THEIR CAGES AND THEIR KEEP: Being a Practical Manual of Bird-Keeping and Bird-Rearing. By K. A. BUIST. With Coloured Frontispiece and other Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 5s.

Bunce.—FAIRY TALES, THEIR ORIGIN AND MEANING. With some Account of the Dwellers in Fairy Land. By J. THACKRAY BUNCE. Extra fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. [*Shortly.*

Burnand.—MY TIME, AND WHAT I'VE DONE WITH IT. By F. C. BURNAND. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Cameron.—LIGHT, SHADE, AND TOIL. Poems by W. C. CAMERON, with Introduction by the Rev. W. C. Smith, D.D. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6s.

Carroll.—Works by "LEWIS CARROLL:"—

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND. With Forty-two Illustrations by TENNIEL. 55th Thousand. Crown 8vo. cloth. 6s.

"*An excellent piece of nonsense.*"—TIMES. "*Elegant and delicious nonsense.*"—GUARDIAN. "*That most delightful of children's stories.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

A GERMAN TRANSLATION OF THE SAME. With TENNIEL'S Illustrations. Crown 8vo. gilt. 6s.

A FRENCH TRANSLATION OF THE SAME. With TENNIEL'S Illustrations. Crown 8vo. gilt. 6s.

AN ITALIAN TRANSLATION OF THE SAME. By T. P. ROSSETTI. With TENNIEL'S Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Carroll (Lewis).—*continued.*

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS, AND WHAT ALICE FOUND THERE. With Fifty Illustrations by TENNIEL. Crown 8vo. gilt. 6*s.* 44th Thousand.

"*Will fairly rank with the tale of her previous experiences.*"—DAILY TELEGRAPH. "*Many of Mr. Tenniel's designs are masterpieces of wise absurdity.*"—ATHENÆUM.

THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK. An Agony in Eight Fits. With Nine Illustrations by H. Holiday. Crown 8vo. cloth extra, Gilt edges. 4*s.* 6*d.* 17th Thousand.

"*This glorious piece of nonsense. . . . Everybody ought to read it—nearly everybody will—and all who deserve the treat will scream with laughter.*"—GRAPHIC.

Cautley.—A CENTURY OF EMBLEMS. By G. S. CAUTLEY, Vicar of Nettleden, author of "The After Glow," etc. With numerous Illustrations by LADY MARION ALFORD, REAR-ADMIRAL LORD W. COMPTON, the VEN. LORD A. COMPTON, R. BARNES, J. D. COOPER, and the author. Pott 4to. cloth elegant, gilt edges. 10*s.* 6*d.*

Christmas Carol (A). Printed in Colours from Original Designs by Mr. and Mrs. TREVOR CRISPIN, with Illuminated Borders from MSS. of the 14th and 15th Centuries. Imp. 4to. cloth elegant. Cheaper Edition, 21*s.*

"*A most exquisitely got-up volume.*"—TIMES.

Church (A. J.)—HORÆ TENNYSONIANÆ, Sive Eclogæ e Tennysono Latine redditæ. Cura A. J. CHURCH, A.M. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s.*

Clough (Arthur Hugh).—THE POEMS AND PROSE REMAINS OF ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH. With a Selection from his Letters and a Memoir. Edited by his Wife. With Portrait. Two Vols. Crown 8vo. 21*s.*

"*Taken as a whole,*" *the* SPECTATOR *says,* "*these volumes cannot fail to be a lasting monument of one of the most original men of our age.*"

THE POEMS OF ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, sometime Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. Fifth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 6*s.*

"*From the higher mind of cultivated, all-questioning, but still conservative England, in this our puzzled generation, we do not know of any utterance in literature so characteristic as the poems of Arthur Hugh Clough.*"—FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

Clunes.—THE STORY OF PAULINE: an Autobiography. By G. C. CLUNES. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Coleridge.—HUGH CRICHTON'S ROMANCE. A Novel. By CHRISTABEL R. COLERIDGE. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. *6s.*
"*We have read it with more than average interest.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW. "*We can heartily commend this very charming book.*"—STANDARD.

Collects of the Church of England. With a beautifully Coloured Floral Design to each Collect, and Illuminated Cover. Crown 8vo. 12*s.* Also kept in various styles of morocco.
"*This is beyond question,*" *the* ART JOURNAL *says,* "*the most beautiful book of the season.*" *The* GUARDIAN *thinks it* "*a successful attempt to associate in a natural and unforced manner the flowers of our fields and gardens with the course of the Christian year.*"

Colquhoun.—RHYMES AND CHIMES. By F. S. COLQUHOUN (née F. S. FULLER MAITLAND). Extra fcap. 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Cooper.—SEBASTIAN. A Novel. By KATHERINE COOPER. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Dante; AN ESSAY. With a Translation of the "De Monarchia." By the Very Rev. R. W. CHURCH, D.C.L., Dean of St. Paul's. Crown 8vo. [*Immediately.*

Day.—GOVINDA SAMANTA; OR, THE HISTORY OF A BENGAL RAIYAT. By the Rev. LAL BEHARI DAY. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
"*The book presents a careful, minute, and well-drawn picture of Hindoo peasant life.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Days of Old; STORIES FROM OLD ENGLISH HISTORY. By the Author of "Ruth and her Friends." New Edition. 18mo. cloth, extra. 2*s.* 6*d.*
"*Full of truthful and charming historic pictures, is everywhere vital with moral and religious principles, and is written with a brightness of description, and with a dramatic force in the representation of character, that have made, and will always make, it one of the greatest favourites with reading boys.*"—NONCONFORMIST.

Doyle (Sir F. H.)—LECTURES ON POETRY, delivered before the University of Oxford in 1868. By Sir FRANCIS HASTINGS DOYLE, Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Elsie.—A LOWLAND SKETCH. By A. C. M. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Estelle Russell.—By the Author of "The Private Life of Galileo." New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Full of bright pictures of French life. The English family, whose fortunes form the main drift of the story, reside mostly in France, but there are also many English characters and scenes of great interest. It is certainly the work of a fresh, vigorous, and most interesting writer, with a dash of sarcastic humour which is refreshing and not too bitter. "We can send our readers to it with confidence." —SPECTATOR.

Evans.—Works by SEBASTIAN EVANS.

BROTHER FABIAN'S MANUSCRIPT, AND OTHER POEMS. Fcap. 8vo. cloth. 6*s.*

"*In this volume we have full assurance that he has 'the vision and the faculty divine.' . . . Clever and full of kindly humour.*"—GLOBE.

IN THE STUDIO: A DECADE OF POEMS. Extra fcap. 8vo. 5*s.*

"*The finest thing in the book is 'Dudman in Paradise,' a wonderfully vigorous and beautiful story. The poem is a most remarkable one, full of beauty, humour, and pointed satire.*"—ACADEMY.

Farrell.—THE LECTURES OF A CERTAIN PROFESSOR. By the Rev. JOSEPH FARRELL. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Fawcett.—TALES IN POLITICAL ECONOMY. By MILLICENT FAWCETT, Author of "Political Economy for Beginners.' Globe 8vo. 3*s.*

"*The idea is a good one, and it is quite wonderful what a mass of economic teaching the author manages to compress into a small space. . . The true doctrines of international trade, currency, and the ratio between production and population, are set before us and illustrated in a masterly manner.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Fleming.—Works by GEORGE FLEMING.

A NILE NOVEL. Third and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

MIRAGE. A Novel. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Fletcher.—THOUGHTS FROM A GIRL'S LIFE. By LUCY FLETCHER. Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

Freeman. — HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SKETCHES; CHIEFLY ITALIAN. By E. A. FREEMAN, D.C.L., LL.D. With Illustrations by the Author. Crown 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

"*Those who know Italy well will retrace their steps with delight in Mr. Freeman's company, and find him a most interesting guide and instructor.*"—EXAMINER.

Garnett.—IDYLLS AND EPIGRAMS. Chiefly from the Greek Anthology. By RICHARD GARNETT. Fcap. 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*.

"A charming little book. For English readers, Mr. Garnett's translations will open a new world of thought."—WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

Gilmore.—STORM WARRIORS; OR, LIFE-BOAT WORK ON THE GOODWIN SANDS. By the Rev. JOHN GILMORE, M.A., Rector of Holy Trinity, Ramsgate, Author of "The Ramsgate Life-Boat," in *Macmillan's Magazine*. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

"The stories, which are said to be literally exact, are more thrilling than anything in fiction. Mr. Gilmore has done a good work as well as written a good book."—DAILY NEWS.

Guesses at Truth.—By TWO BROTHERS. 18mo. 4*s*. 6*d*. Golden Treasury Series.

Hamerton.—A PAINTER'S CAMP. Second Edition, revised. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s*.

"These pages, written with infinite spirit and humour, bring into close rooms, back upon tired heads, the breezy airs of Lancashire moors and Highland lochs, with a freshness which no recent novelist has succeeded in preserving."—NONCONFORMIST.

Harry.—A POEM. By the Author of "Mrs. Jerningham's Journal." Extra fcap. 8vo. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Heine.—SELECTIONS FROM THE POETICAL WORKS OF HEINRICH HEINE. Translated into English. Crown 8vo. 4*s*. 6*d*.

Higginson.—MALBONE: An Oldport Romance. By T. W. HIGGINSON. Fcap. 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*.

Hilda among the Broken Gods.—By the Author of "Olrig Grange." Extra fcap. 8vo. 7*s*. 6*d*.

Hobday. — COTTAGE GARDENING; OR, FLOWERS, FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR SMALL GARDENS. By E. HOBDAY. Crown 8vo. 1*s*. 6*d*.

"A sensible and useful little book."—ATHENÆUM.

Home.—BLANCHE LISLE, and other Poems. By CECIL HOME. Fcap. 8vo. 4*s*. 6*d*.

Hood (Tom).—THE PLEASANT TALE OF PUSS AND ROBIN AND THEIR FRIENDS, KITTY AND BOB. Told in Pictures by L. FRÖLICH, and in Rhymes by TOM HOOD. Crown 8vo. gilt. 3*s*. 6*d*.

"The volume is prettily got up, and is sure to be a favourite in the nursery."—SCOTSMAN. *"Herr Frölich has outdone himself in his pictures of this dramatic chase."*—MORNING POST.

Hooper and Phillips.—A MANUAL OF MARKS ON POTTERY AND PORCELAIN. A Dictionary of Easy Reference. By W. H. HOOPER and W. C. PHILLIPS. With numerous Illustrations. Second Edition, revised. 16mo. 4*s*. 6*d*.

"*It is one of the most complete, and beyond all comparison, the handiest volume of the kind.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Hopkins.—ROSE TURQUAND. A Novel. By ELLICE HOPKINS. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

"*Rose Turquand is a noble heroine, and the story of her sufferings and of her sacrifice is most touching. A tale of rare excellence.*"—STANDARD.

Horace.—WORD FOR WORD FROM HORACE. The Odes literally versified. By W. T. THORNTON, C.B. Crown 8vo. 7*s*. 6*d*.

Hunt.—TALKS ABOUT ART. By WILLIAM HUNT. With a Letter by J. E. MILLAIS. Crown 8vo. 3*s*. 6*d*.

"*They are singularly racy and suggestive.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Irving.—Works by WASHINGTON IRVING.

OLD CHRISTMAS. From the Sketch Book. With upwards of 100 Illustrations by Randolph Caldecott, engraved by J. D. Cooper. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. cloth elegant. 6*s*.

"*This little volume is indeed a gem.*"—DAILY NEWS. "*One of the best and prettiest volumes we have seen this year. . . . All the illustrations are equally charming and equally worthy of the immortal words to which they are wedded.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

BRACEBRIDGE HALL. With 120 illustrations by R. Caldecott. Crown 8vo. cloth gilt. 6*s*.

"*No one who has seen 'Old Christmas,' issued last year with charming illustrations by Mr. Caldecott, is likely to forget the pleasure he derived from turning over its pages. Text and illustrations, both having a flavour of quaint, old-fashioned humour, fit into each other to perfection, and leave an impression absolutely unique. . . . This work is in no respect behind its predecessor.*"—GLOBE.

James.—Works by HENRY JAMES, jun.

FRENCH POETS AND NOVELISTS. Crown 8vo. 8*s*. 6*d*.

CONTENTS:—Alfred de Musset—Théophile Gautier—Baudelaire—Honoré de Balzac—George Sand—Turgénieff, etc.

"*There has of late years appeared nothing upon French literature so intelligent as this book—so acute, so full of good sense, so free from affectation and pretence.*"—ATHENÆUM.

THE EUROPEANS. A Novel. 2 vols. Crown 8vo. 21*s*.

Joubert.—PENSÉES OF JOUBERT. Selected and Translated with the Original French appended, by HENRY ATTWELL, Knight of the Order of the Oak Crown. Crown 8vo. 5s.

Keary (A.)—Works by ANNIE KEARY:—

CASTLE DALY: THE STORY OF AN IRISH HOME THIRTY YEARS AGO. New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.
"*Extremely touching, and at the same time thoroughly amusing.*"—MORNING POST.

JANET'S HOME. New Edition. Globe 8vo. 2s. 6d.

CLEMENCY FRANKLYN. New Edition. Globe 8vo. 2s. 6d.
"*Full of wisdom and goodness, simple, truthful, and artistic. . . It is capital as a story; better still in its pure tone and wholesome influence.*"—GLOBE.

OLDBURY. New and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.
"*This is a very powerfully written story.*"—GLOBE. "*This is a really excellent novel.*"—ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS. "*The sketches of society in Oldbury are excellent. The pictures of child life are full of truth.*"—WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE. Crown 8vo. 6s.
"*A very pleasant and thoroughly interesting book.*"—JOHN BULL.

Keary (E.)—THE MAGIC VALLEY; or, PATIENT ANTOINE. With Illustrations by E. V. B. Globe 8vo. gilt. 4s. 6d.
"*A very pretty, tender, quaint little tale.*"—TIMES.

Keary (A. and E.)—Works by A. and E. KEARY:—

THE LITTLE WANDERLIN, and other Fairy Tales. 18mo. 2s. 6d.
"*The tales are fanciful and well written, and they are sure to win favour amongst little readers.*"—ATHENÆUM.

THE HEROES OF ASGARD. Tales from Scandinavian Mythology. New and Revised Edition, Illustrated by HUARD. Extra fcap. 8vo. 4s. 6d.
"*Told in a light and amusing style, which, in its drollery and quaintness, reminds us of our old favourite Grimm.*"—TIMES.

Kingsley.—Works by the Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY, M.A., Rector of Eversley, and Canon of Westminster:—

WESTWARD HO! or, The Voyages and Adventures of Sir Amyas Leigh. Forty-first Thousand. Crown 8vo. 6s.

TWO YEARS AGO. Ninth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.

HYPATIA; or, New Foes with an Old Face. Ninth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Kingsley (C.)—*continued.*

HEREWARD THE WAKE—LAST OF THE ENGLISH. Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

YEAST: A Problem. Tenth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

ALTON LOCKE. New Edition. With a Prefatory Memoir by THOMAS HUGHES, Q.C., and Portrait of the Author. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

THE WATER BABIES. A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby. With Illustrations by Sir NOEL PATON, R.S.A., and P. SKELTON. New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*In fun, in humour, and in innocent imagination, as a child's book we do not know its equal.*"—LONDON REVIEW. "*Mr. Kingsley must have the credit of revealing to us a new order of life. . . . There is in the 'Water Babies' an abundance of wit, fun, good humour, geniality,* élan, *go.*"—TIMES.

THE HEROES; or, Greek Fairy Tales for my Children. With Illustrations. New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*We do not think these heroic stories have ever been more attractively told. . . There is a deep under-current of religious feeling traceable throughout its pages which is sure to influence young readers powerfully.*"—LONDON REVIEW. "*One of the children's books that will surely become a classic.*"—NONCONFORMIST.

PHAETHON; or, Loose Thoughts for Loose Thinkers. Third Edition. Crown 8vo. 2*s.*

"*The dialogue of 'Phaethon' has striking beauties, and its suggestions may meet half-way many a latent doubt, and, like a light breeze, lift from the soul clouds that are gathering heavily, and threatening to settle down in misty gloom on the summer of many a fair and promising young life.*"—SPECTATOR.

POEMS; including The Saint's Tragedy, Andromeda, Songs, Ballads, etc. Complete Collected Edition. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s.*

The SPECTATOR *calls "Andromeda" "the finest piece of English hexameter verse that has ever been written. It is a volume which many readers will be glad to possess."*

PROSE IDYLLS. NEW AND OLD. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

CONTENTS:—*A Charm of Birds; Chalk-Stream Studies; The Fens; My Winter-Garden; From Ocean to Sea; North Devon.*

"*Altogether a delightful book. . . . . It exhibits the author's best traits, and cannot fail to infect the reader with a love of nature and of out-door life and its enjoyments. It is well calculated to bring a gleam of summer with its pleasant associations, into the bleak winter-time; while a better companion for a summer ramble could hardly be found.*"—BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

GLAUCUS; OR, THE WONDERS OF THE SEA-SHORE. With Coloured Illustrations. Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Kingsley (H.)—Works by HENRY KINGSLEY :—

TALES OF OLD TRAVEL. Re-narrated. With Eight full-page Illustrations by HUARD. Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. cloth, extra gilt. 5*s.*

"*We know no better book for those who want knowledge or seek to refresh it. As for the 'sensational,' most novels are tame compared with these narratives.*"—ATHENÆUM. "*Exactly the book to interest and to do good to intelligent and high-spirited boys.*"—LITERARY CHURCHMAN.

THE LOST CHILD. With Eight Illustrations by FRÖLICH. Crown 4to. cloth gilt. 3*s.* 6*d.*

"*A pathetic story, and told so as to give children an interest in Australian ways and scenery.*"—GLOBE. "*Very charmingly and very touchingly told.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Knatchbull-Hugessen.—Works by E. H. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, M.P. :—

Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen has won for himself a reputation as a teller of fairy-tales. "*His powers,*" *says the* TIMES, "*are of a very high order; light and brilliant narrative flows from his pen, and is fed by an invention as graceful as it is inexhaustible.*" "*Children reading his stories,*" *the* SCOTSMAN *says,* "*or hearing them read, will have their minds refreshed and invigorated as much as their bodies would be by abundance of fresh air and exercise.*"

STORIES FOR MY CHILDREN. With Illustrations. Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

"*The stories are charming, and full of life and fun.*"—STANDARD. "*The author has an imagination as fanciful as Grimm himself, while some of his stories are superior to anything that Hans Christian Andersen has written.*"—NONCONFORMIST.

CRACKERS FOR CHRISTMAS. More Stories. With Illustrations by JELLICOE and ELWES. Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

"*A fascinating little volume, which will make him friends in every household in which there are children.*"—DAILY NEWS.

MOONSHINE: Fairy Tales. With Illustrations by W. BRUNTON. Seventh Edition. Crown 8vo. cloth gilt. 5*s.*

"*A volume of fairy tales, written not only for ungrown children, but for bigger, and if you are nearly worn out, or sick, or sorry, you will find it good reading.*"—GRAPHIC. "*The most charming volume of fairy tales which we have ever read. . . . We cannot quit this very pleasant book without a word of praise to its illustrator. Mr. Brunton from first to last has done admirably.*"—TIMES.

TALES AT TEA-TIME. Fairy Stories. With Seven Illustrations by W. BRUNTON. Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. Cloth gilt. 5*s.*

Knatchbull-Hugessen (E. H.)—*continued.*

"*Capitally illustrated by W. Brunton. . . . In frolic and fancy they are quite equal to his other books. The author knows how to write fairy stories as they should be written. The whole book is full of the most delightful drolleries.*"—TIMES.

QUEER FOLK. FAIRY STORIES. Illustrated by S. E. WALLER. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo. Cloth gilt. 5*s.*

"*Decidedly the author's happiest effort. . . . One of the best story books of the year.*"—HOUR.

Knatchbull-Hugessen (Louisa).—THE HISTORY OF PRINCE PERRYPETS. A Fairy Tale. By LOUISA KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN. With Eight Illustrations by WEIGAND. New Edition. Crown 4to. cloth gilt. 3*s.* 6*d.*

"*A grand and exciting fairy tale.*"—MORNING POST. "*A delicious piece of fairy nonsense.*"—ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

Knox.—SONGS OF CONSOLATION. By ISA CRAIG KNOX. Extra fcap. 8vo. Cloth extra, gilt edges. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"*The verses are truly sweet; there is in them not only much genuine poetic quality, but an ardent, flowing devotedness, and a peculiar skill in propounding theological tenets in the most graceful way, which any divine might envy.*"—SCOTSMAN.

Leading Cases done into English. By an Apprentice of Lincoln's Inn. Third Edition. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

"*The versifier of these 'Leading Cases' has been most successful. He has surrounded his legal distinctions with a halo of mock passion which is in itself in the highest degree entertaining, especially when the style of the different modern poets is so admirably hit off that the cloud of associations which hangs round one of Mr. Swinburne's, or Mr. Rossetti's, or Mr. Browning's, or Mr. Clough's, or Mr. Tennyson's poems, is summoned up to set off the mock tenderness or mock patriotism of the strain itself.*"—SPECTATOR.

Leland.—JOHNNYKIN AND THE GOBLINS. By C. G. LELAND, Author of "Hans Breitmann's Ballads." With numerous Illustrations by the Author. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*Mr. Leland is rich in fantastic conception and full of rollicking fun, and youngsters will amazingly enjoy his book.*"—BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

Life and Times of Conrad the Squirrel. A Story for Children. By the Author of "Wandering Willie," "Effie's Friends," &c. With a Frontispiece by R. FARREN. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

"*Having commenced on the first page, we were compelled to go on to the conclusion, and this we predict will be the case with every one who opens the book.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Little Estella, and other FAIRY TALES FOR THE YOUNG. 18mo. cloth extra. 2*s*. 6*d*.

"*This is a fine story, and we thank heaven for not being too wise to enjoy it.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Loftie.—FORTY-SIX SOCIAL TWITTERS. By MRS. LOFTIE. 16mo. 2*s*. 6*d*.

"*Many of these essays are bright and pleasant, and extremely sensible remarks are scattered about the book.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Lorne.—Works by the MARQUIS OF LORNE :—

GUIDO AND LITA: A TALE OF THE RIVIERA. A Poem. Third Edition. Small 4to. cloth elegant, with Illustrations. 7*s*. 6*d*.

"*Lord Lorne has the gifts of expression as well as the feelings of a poet.*"—TIMES. "*A volume of graceful and harmonious verse.*"—STANDARD. "*We may congratulate the Marquis on something more than a mere succès d'estime.*"—GRAPHIC. "*Lucidity of thought and gracefulness of expression abound in this attractive poem.*"—MORNING POST.

THE BOOK OF THE PSALMS, LITERALLY RENDERED IN VERSE. With Three Illustrations. Third Edition. Crown 8vo. 7*s*. 6*d*.

"*His version is such a great improvement upon Rous that it will be surprising should it not supplant the old version in the Scottish churches. . . . on the whole, it would not be rash, to call Lord Lorne's the best rhymed Psalter we have.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Lowell.—COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS of JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. With Portrait, engraved by Jeens. 18mo. cloth extra. 4*s*. 6*d*.

"*All readers who are able to recognise and appreciate genuine verse will give a glad welcome to this beautiful little volume.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Lyttelton.—Works by LORD LYTTELTON :—

THE "COMUS" OF MILTON, rendered into Greek Verse. Extra fcap. 8vo. 5*s*.

THE "SAMSON AGONISTES" OF MILTON, rendered into Greek Verse. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s*. 6*d*.

Macdonell.—FOR THE KING'S DUES. By AGNES MACDONELL, Author of "Martin's Vineyard." Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Mackinlay.—POEMS. By JAMES M. MACKINLAY, M.A., Extra fcap. 8vo. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Maclaren.—THE FAIRY FAMILY. A series of Ballads and Metrical Tales illustrating the Fairy Mythology of Europe. By ARCHIBALD MACLAREN. With Frontispiece, Illustrated Title, and Vignette. Crown 8vo. gilt. 5*s.*

Macmillan's Magazine.—Published Monthly. Price 1*s.* Volumes I. to XXXVIII. are now ready. 7*s.* 6*d.* each.

Macquoid.—PATTY. By KATHARINE S. MACQUOID. Third and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*A book to be read.*"—STANDARD. "*A powerful and fascinating story.*"—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

Maguire.—YOUNG PRINCE MARIGOLD, AND OTHER FAIRY STORIES. By the late JOHN FRANCIS MAGUIRE, M.P. Illustrated by S. E. WALLER. Globe 8vo. gilt. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"*The author has evidently studied the ways and tastes of children and got at the secret of amusing them; and has succeeded in what is not so easy a task as it may seem—in producing a really good children's book.*"—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

Mahaffy.—Works by J. P. MAHAFFY, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin.

SOCIAL LIFE IN GREECE FROM HOMER TO MENANDER. Third Edition, enlarged, with New Chapter on Greek Art. Crown 8vo. 9*s.*

"*Should be in the hands of all who desire thoroughly to understand and to enjoy Greek literature, and to get an intelligent idea of the old Greek life.*"—GUARDIAN.

RAMBLES AND STUDIES IN GREECE. Illustrated. Second Edition, revised and enlarged, with Map. Crown 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

"*A singularly instructive and agreeable volume.*"—ATHENÆUM.

"*This charmingly picturesque and lively volume.*"—EXAMINER.

Massey.—SONGS OF THE NOONTIDE REST. By LUCY MASSEY, Author of "Thoughts from a Girl's Life." Fcap. 8vo. cloth extra. 4*s.* 6*d.*

Masson (Mrs.)—THREE CENTURIES OF ENGLISH POETRY: being selections from Chaucer to Herrick, with Introductions and Notes by Mrs. MASSON and a general introduction by PROFESSOR MASSON. Extra fcap. 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

"*Most excellently done. The selections are made with good taste and discrimination. The notes, too, are to the point. We can most strongly recommend the book.*"—WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

Masson (Professor).—Works by DAVID MASSON, M.A., Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in the University of Edinburgh.

Masson (Professor)—*continued.*
WORDSWORTH, SHELLEY, KEATS, AND OTHER ESSAYS. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*
CHATTERTON: A Story of the Year 1770. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*
THE THREE DEVILS: LUTHER'S, MILTON'S, and GOETHE'S; and other Essays. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

Mazini.—IN THE GOLDEN SHELL; A Story of Palermo. By LINDA MAZINI. With Illustrations. Globe 8vo. cloth gilt. 4*s.* 6*d.*
"*As beautiful and bright and fresh as the scenes to which it wafts us over the blue Mediterranean, and as pure and innocent, but piquant and sprightly as the little girl who plays the part of its heroine, is this admirable little book.*"—ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

Merivale.—KEATS' HYPERION, rendered into Latin Verse. By C. MERIVALE, B.D. Second Edition. Extra fcap. 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Milner.—THE LILY OF LUMLEY. By EDITH MILNER. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Milton's Poetical Works.—Edited with Text collated from the best Authorities, with Introduction and Notes by DAVID MASSON. Three vols. 8vo. 42*s.* With Three Portraits engraved by C. H. JEENS. (Uniform with the Cambridge Shakespeare.)
"*An edition of Milton which is certain to be the standard edition for many years to come, and which is as complete and satisfactory as can be conceived.*"—EXAMINER.
Golden Treasury Edition. By the same Editor. With Two Portraits. 2 vols. 18mo. 9*s.*

Mistral (F.)—MIRELLE, a Pastoral Epic of Provence. Translated by H. CRICHTON. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s.*

Mitford (A. B.)—TALES OF OLD JAPAN. By A. B. MITFORD, Second Secretary to the British Legation in Japan. With Illustrations drawn and cut on Wood by Japanese Artists New and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
"*They will always be interesting as memorials of a most exceptional society; while, regarded simply as tales, they are sparkling, sensational, and dramatic, and the originality of their ideas and the quaintness of their language give them a most captivating piquancy. The illustrations are extremely interesting, and for the curious in such matters have a special and particular value.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Molesworth.—Works by Mrs. MOLESWORTH (ENNIS GRAHAM):—
GRANDMOTHER DEAR. Illustrated by WALTER CRANE. Extra fcap. 8vo. cloth gilt. 4*s.* 6*d.* [*Just ready.*

Molesworth (Mrs.)—*continued.*

TELL ME A STORY. Illustrated by WALTER CRANE. Globe 8vo. gilt. 4s. 6d. Second Edition.

"*So delightful that we are inclined to join in the petition, and we hope she may soon tell us more stories.*"—ATHENÆUM.

"CARROTS": JUST A LITTLE BOY. Illustrated by WALTER CRANE. Eighth Thousand. Globe 8vo. gilt. 4s. 6d.

"*One of the cleverest and most pleasing stories it has been our good fortune to meet with for some time. 'Carrots' and his sister are delightful little beings, whom to read about is at once to be become very fond of.*—EXAMINER.

THE CUCKOO CLOCK. Illustrated by WALTER CRANE. Eighth Thousand. Globe 8vo. gilt. 4s. 6d.

"*A beautiful little story. . . . It will be read with delight by every child into whose hands it is placed. . . . Ennis Graham deserves all the praise that has been, is, and will be, bestowed on 'The Cuckoo Clock. Children's stories are plentiful, but one like this is not to be met with every day.*" —PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Morgan.—BARON BRUNO; OR, THE UNBELIEVING PHILOSOPHER, AND OTHER FAIRY STORIES. By LOUISA MORGAN. Illustrated by R. Caldecott. Crown 8vo. gilt. 5s.

"*The prettiest collection of stories we have seen for a long time. One and all are graceful and dreamy little prose-poems with something of the bewitching pathos of Hans Christian Andersen's 'Little Mermaid,' and 'Eleven Swans.'*"—EXAMINER.

Moulton.—SWALLOW FLIGHTS. Poems by LOUISA CHANDLER MOULTON. Extra fcap. 8vo. 4s. 6d.

The ATHENÆUM says:—"*Mrs. Moulton has a real claim to attention. It is not too much to say of these poems that they exhibit delicate and rare beauty, marked originality, and perfection of style. What is still better, they impress us with a sense of vivid and subtle imagination, and that spontaneous feeling which is the essence of lyrical poetry.*"

Moultrie.—POEMS by JOHN MOULTRIE. Complete Edition. 2 vols. Crown 8vo. 7s. each.

Vol. I. MY BROTHER'S GRAVE, DREAM OF LIFE, &c. With Memoir by the Rev. Prebendary COLERIDGE.

Vol. II. LAYS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH, and other Poems. With notices of the Rectors of Rugby, by M. H. BLOXHAM. F.R.A.S.

Mrs. Jerningham's Journal. A Poem purporting to be the Journal of a newly-married Lady. Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"It is nearly a perfect gem. We have had nothing so good for a long time, and those who neglect to read it are neglecting one of the jewels of contemporary history."—EDINBURGH DAILY REVIEW. *"One quality in the piece, sufficient of itself to claim a moment's attention, is that it is unique—original, indeed, is not too strong a word—in the manner of its conception and execution.'* —PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Mudie.—STRAY LEAVES. By C. E. MUDIE. New Edition. Extra fcap. 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* Contents:—"His and Mine"—"Night and Day"—"One of Many," &c.

This little volume consists of a number of poems, mostly of a genuinely devotional character. "They are for the most part so exquisitely sweet and delicate as to be quite a marvel of composition. They are worthy of being laid up in the recesses of the heart, and recalled to memory from time to time."—ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

Murray.—ROUND ABOUT FRANCE. By E. C. GRENVILLE MURRAY. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

"A most amusing series of articles."—ATHENÆUM.

Myers (Ernest).—Works by ERNEST MYERS:—

THE PURITANS. Extra fcap. 8vo. cloth. 2*s.* 6*d.*

POEMS. Extra fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"The diction is excellent, the rhythm falls pleasantly on the ear, there is a classical flavour in the verse which is eminently grateful, the thought and imagery are poetical in character."—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Myers (F. W. H.)—POEMS. By F. W. H. MYERS. Containing "St. Paul," "St. John," and others. Extra fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"It is rare to find a writer who combines to such an extent the faculty of communicating feelings with the faculty of euphonious expression."—SPECTATOR.

Nichol.—HANNIBAL, A HISTORICAL DRAMA. By JOHN NICHOL, B.A. Oxon., Regius Professor of English Language and Literature in the University of Glasgow. Extra fcap. 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Nine Years Old.—By the Author of "St. Olave's," "When I was a Little Girl," &c. Illustrated by FRÖLICH. Fourth Edition. Extra fcap. 8vo. cloth gilt. 4*s.* 6*d.*

It is believed that this story, by the favourably known author of "St. Olave's," will be found both highly interesting and instructive to the young. The volume contains eight graphic illustrations by Mr. L. Frölich. The EXAMINER *says: "Whether the readers are nine years old, or twice, or seven times as old, they must enjoy this pretty volume."*

Noel.—BEATRICE AND OTHER POEMS. By the HON. RODEN NOEL. Fcap. 8vo. 6*s.*

Noel (Lady Augusta).—OWEN GWYNNE'S GREAT WORK. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Norton.—Works by the Hon. Mrs. NORTON :—

THE LADY OF LA GARAYE. With Vignette and Frontispiece. Eighth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"*Full of thought well expressed, and may be classed among her best efforts.*"—TIMES.

OLD SIR DOUGLAS. New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*This varied and lively novel—this clever novel so full of character, and of fine incidental remark.*"—SCOTSMAN. "*One of the pleasantest and healthiest stories of modern fiction.*"—GLOBE.

Oliphant.—Works by Mrs. OLIPHANT :—

AGNES HOPETOUN'S SCHOOLS AND HOLIDAYS. New Edition with Illustrations. Royal 16mo. gilt leaves. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"*There are few books of late years more fitted to touch the heart, purify the feeling, and quicken and sustain right principles.*"—NONCONFORMIST. "*A more gracefully written story it is impossible to desire.*"—DAILY NEWS.

A SON OF THE SOIL. New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*It is a very different work from the ordinary run of novels. The whole life of a man is portrayed in it, worked out with subtlety and insight.*"—ATHENÆUM

THE CURATE IN CHARGE. Crown 8vo. 6*s.* Sixth Edition

"*We can pronounce it one of the happiest of her recent efforts.*"—TIMES.

THE MAKERS OF FLORENCE: Dante, Giotto, Savonarola, and their City. With Illustrations from Drawings by Professor Delamotte, and a Steel Portrait of Savonarola, engraved by C. H. JEENS. Second Edition with Preface. Medium 8vo. Cloth extra. 21*s.*

The EDINBURGH REVIEW *says* "*We cannot leave this subject without expressing our admiration for the beautiful volume which Mrs. Oliphant has devoted to the 'Makers of Florence'—one of the most elegant and interesting books which has been inspired in our time by the arts and annals of that celebrated Republic.*"

YOUNG MUSGRAVE. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Our Year. A Child's Book, in Prose and Verse. By the Author of "John Halifax, Gentleman." Illustrated by CLARENCE DOBELL. Royal 16mo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

"*It is just the book we could wish to see in the hands of every child.*" —ENGLISH CHURCHMAN.

Palgrave.—Works by FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE, M.A., late Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford :—

THE FIVE DAYS' ENTERTAINMENTS AT WENTWORTH GRANGE. A Book for Children. With Illustrations by ARTHUR HUGHES, and Engraved Title-page by JEENS. Small 4to. cloth extra. 6s.

"*If you want a really good book for both sexes and all ages, buy this, as handsome a volume of tales as you'll find in all the market.*"—ATHENÆUM. "*Exquisite both in form and substance.*" —GUARDIAN.

LYRICAL POEMS. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6s.

"*A volume of pure quiet verse, sparkling with tender melodies, and alive with thoughts of genuine poetry. . . . Turn where we will throughout the volume, we find traces of beauty, tenderness, and truth; true poet's work, touched and refined by the master-hand of a real artist, who shows his genius even in trifles.*"—STANDARD.

ORIGINAL HYMNS. Third Edition, enlarged, 18mo. 1s. 6d.

"*So choice, so perfect, and so refined, so tender in feeling, and so scholarly in expression, that we look with special interest to everything that he gives us.*"—LITERARY CHURCHMAN.

GOLDEN TREASURY OF THE BEST SONGS AND LYRICS. Edited by F. T. PALGRAVE. 18mo. 4s. 6d.

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS AND SONGS. Edited by F. T. PALGRAVE. Gem Edition. With Vignette Title by JEENS. 3s. 6d.

"*For minute elegance no volume could possibly excel the 'Gem Edition.'*"—SCOTSMAN.

THE CHILDREN'S TREASURY OF LYRICAL POETRY. Selected and arranged with Notes by F. T. PALGRAVE. 18mo. 2s. 6d., and in Two Parts, 1s. each.

HERRICK: SELECTIONS FROM THE LYRICAL POEMS. With Notes. 18mo. 4s. 6d.

Pater.—Works by WALTER PATER, Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford :—

THE RENAISSANCE. Studies in Art and Poetry. Second Edition, Revised, with Vignette, engraved by C. H. Jeens. Crown 8vo. 10s. 6d.

"*Mr. Pater's Studies in the history of the Renaissance, constitute the most remarkable example of this younger movement towards a fresh and inner criticism, and they are in themselves a singular and interesting addition to literature. The subjects are of the very kind in which we need instruction and guidance, and there is a moral in the very choice of them. From the point of view of form and literary composition they are striking in the highest degree. They introduce to English readers a new and distinguished master in the great ana difficult art of writing prose. Their style is*

marked by a flavour at once full and exquisite, by a quality that mixes richness with delicacy and a firm coherency with infinite subtlety."—FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.

DIONYSUS; and other Studies. Crown 8vo. [*Shortly.*

Patmore.—THE CHILDREN'S GARLAND, from the Best Poets. Selected and arranged by COVENTRY PATMORE. New Edition. With Illustrations by J. LAWSON. Crown 8vo. gilt. 6*s.* Golden Treasury Edition. 18mo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"*The charming illustrations added to many of the poems will add greatly to their value in the eyes of children.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Peel.—ECHOES FROM HOREB, AND OTHER POEMS. By EDMUND PEEL, Author of "An Ancient City," etc. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Pember.—THE TRAGEDY OF LESBOS. A Dramatic Poem. By E. H. PEMBER. Fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

Founded upon the story of Sappho. "He tells his story with dramatic force, and in language that often rises almost to grandeur."—ATHENÆUM.

Phillips.—BENEDICTA. A Novel. By Mrs. ALFRED PHILLIPS. 3 Vols. Crown 8vo. 31*s.* 6*d.*

Philpot.—A POCKET OF PEBBLES, WITH A FEW SHELLS; Being Fragments of Reflection, now and then with Cadence, made up mostly by the Sea-shore. By the Rev. W. B. PHILPOT. Second Edition, picked, sorted, and polished anew; with Two Illustrations by GEORGE SMITH. Fcap. 8vo. 5*s.*

Poole.—PICTURES OF COTTAGE LIFE IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND. By MARGARET E. POOLE. New and Cheaper Edition. With Frontispiece by R. Farren. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Population of an Old Pear Tree. From the French of E. VAN BRUYSSEL. Edited by the Author of "The Heir of Redclyffe." With Illustrations by BECKER. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. gilt. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"*A whimsical and charming little book.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Prince Florestan of Monaco, The Fall of. By HIMSELF. New Edition, with Illustration and Map. 8vo. cloth. Extra gilt edges, 5*s.* A French Translation, 5*s.* Also an Edition for the People. Crown 8vo. 1*s.*

Quin.—GARDEN RECEIPTS. Edited by CHARLES QUIN. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

"*The most useful book for the garden that has been published for some time.*"—FLORIST AND POMOLOGIST.

Realmah.—By the Author of "Friends in Council." Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Rhoades.—POEMS. By JAMES RHOADES. Fcap. 8vo. 4*s*. 6*d*.

Richardson.—THE ILIAD OF THE EAST. A Selection of Legends drawn from Valmiki's Sanskrit Poem, "The Ramayana." By FREDERIKA RICHARDSON. Crown 8vo. 7*s*. 6*d*.

"*It is impossible to read it without recognizing the value and interest of the Eastern epic. It is as fascinating as a fairy tale, this romantic poem of India.*"—GLOBE. "*A charming volume, which at once enmeshes the reader in its snares.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Rimmer.—ANCIENT STREETS AND HOMESTEADS OF ENGLAND. By ALFRED RIMMER. With Introduction by the Very Rev. J. S. HOWSON, D.D., Dean of Chester. Royal 8vo. with 150 Illustrations by the Author. Cloth elegant, 21*s*.

"*All the illustrations are clear and good, and they are eminently truthful. . . . A book which gladdens the eye while it instructs and improves the mind.*"—STANDARD. "*One of the most interesting and beautiful books we have seen this season. . . . It is full of knowledge, the result of exact and faithful study, most readable and interesting; the illustrations are simply exquisite.*" —NONCONFORMIST.

Robinson.—GEORGE LINTON; OR, THE FIRST YEARS OF AN ENGLISH COLONY. By JOHN ROBINSON, F.R.G.S. Crown 8vo. 7*s*. 6*d*.

"*If one may speak confidently on such a matter from one's own experience, it must be a rare thing for a critic to put down a novel, having read every word of it, and find himself at the end asking for more. Yet this is what happened to us with George Linton.*" —SPECTATOR.

Rossetti.—Works by CHRISTINA ROSSETTI:—

POEMS. Complete Edition, containing "Goblin Market," "The Prince's Progress," &c. With Four Illustrations. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s*.

SPEAKING LIKENESSES. Illustrated by ARTHUR HUGHES. Crown 8vo. gilt edges. 4*s*. 6*d*.

"*Certain to be a delight to many a juvenile fireside circle.*"—MORNING POST.

Ruth and her Friends. A Story for Girls. With a Frontispiece. Seventh Edition. Extra fcap. 8vo. 4*s*. 6*d*.

"*We wish all the school girls and home-taught girls in the land had the opportunity of reading it.*"—NONCONFORMIST.

Scouring of The White Horse; or, the Long VACATION RAMBLE OF A LONDON CLERK. Illustrated by DOYLE. Imp. 16mo. Cheaper Issue. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Shairp (Principal).—KILMAHOE, a Highland Pastoral, with other Poems. By JOHN CAMPBELL SHAIRP, Principal of the United College, St. Andrews. Fcap. 8vo. 5*s.*

"*Kilmahoe is a Highland Pastoral, redolent of the warm soft air of the western lochs and moors, sketched out with remarkable grace and picturesqueness.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Shakespeare.—The Works of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. Cambridge Edition. Edited by W. GEORGE CLARK, M.A. and W. ALDIS WRIGHT, M.A. Nine vols. 8vo. cloth.

The GUARDIAN *calls it an "excellent, and, to the student, almost indispensable edition;" and the* EXAMINER *calls it "an unrivalled edition."*

Shakespeare's Plays.—An attempt to determine the Chronological Order. By the Rev. H. PAINE STOKES, B.A. Extra fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

Shakespeare Scenes and Characters.—A Series o Illustrations designed by ADAMO, HOFMANN, MAKART, PECHT, SCHWOERER, and SPEISS, engraved on Steel by BANKEL, BAUER, GOLDBERG, RAAB, and SCHMIDT; with Explanatory Text, selected and arranged by Professor DOWDEN. Royal 8vo. Cloth elegant. 2*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Also a LARGE PAPER EDITION, India Proofs. Folio, half-morocco elegant. 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.*

Shakespeare's Tempest. Edited with Glossarial and Explanatory Notes, by the Rev. J. M. JEPHSON. New Edition. 18mo. 1*s.*

Slip (A) in the Fens.—Illustrated by the Author. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*An artistic little volume, for every page is a picture.*"—TIMES. "*It will be read with pleasure, and with a pleasure that is altogether innocent.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Smedley.—TWO DRAMATIC POEMS. By MENELLA BUTE SMEDLEY, Author of "Lady Grace," &c. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6*s.*

"*May be read with enjoyment and profit.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Smith.—POEMS. By CATHERINE BARNARD SMITH. Fcap. 8vo. 5*s.*

Smith (Rev. Walter).—HYMNS OF CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. By the Rev. WALTER C. SMITH, M.A. Fcap. 8vo. 6*s.*

Southesk.—THE MEDA MAIDEN: AND OTHER POEMS. By the Earl of Southesk, K.T. Extra fcap. 8vo. 7*s.*

"It is pleasant in these days, when there is so much artificial and sensuous verse published, to come across a book so thoroughly fresh and healthy as Lord Southesk's. . . . There is an infinite charm about them in their spontaneity and their healthful philosophy, in the fervent love for nature which is their distinguishing characteristic, and the manly and wholesome tone which pervades every page."—SCOTSMAN.

Stanley.—TRUE TO LIFE.—A SIMPLE STORY. By MARY STANLEY. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s.

"For many a long day we have not met with a more simple, healthy, and unpretending story."—STANDARD.

Stephen (C. E.)—THE SERVICE OF THE POOR; being an Inquiry into the Reasons for and against the Establishment of Religious Sisterhoods for Charitable Purposes. By CAROLINE EMILIA STEPHEN. Crown 8vo. 6s. 6d.

"It touches incidentally and with much wisdom and tenderness on so many of the relations of women, particularly of single women, with society, that it may be read with advantage by many who have never thought of entering a Sisterhood."—SPECTATOR.

Stephens (J. B.)—CONVICT ONCE. A Poem. By J. BRUNTON STEPHENS. Extra fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

"It is as far more interesting than ninety-nine novels out of a hundred, as it is superior to them in power, worth, and beauty. We should most strongly advise everybody to read 'Convict Once.'"
—WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

Streets and Lanes of a City: Being the Reminiscences of AMY DUTTON. With a Preface by the BISHOP OF SALISBURY. Second and Cheaper Edition. Globe 8vo. 2s. 6d.

"One of the most really striking books that has ever come before us."
—LITERARY CHURCHMAN.

Thompson.—A HANDBOOK TO THE PUBLIC PICTURE GALLERIES OF EUROPE. With a brief sketch of the History of the various schools of Painting from the thirteenth century to the eighteenth, inclusive. By KATE THOMPSON. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Extra fcap. 8vo. 6s.

"A very remarkable memoir of the several great schools of painting, and a singularly lucid exhibition of the principal treasures of all the chief and some of the smaller picture galleries of Europe. This unpretending book which does so much for the history of art is also a traveller's guide-book; a guide-book, moreover, so convenient in arrangement and comprehensive in design that it will not fail to become the companion of the majority of English tourists. . . . The large crowd of ordinary connoisseurs who only care to know a little about pictures, and the choicer body of intelligent students of all artistic objects that fall in their way, will

extol the compact little volume as the model of what an art explorer's vade mecum *should be. It will also be found in the highest degree serviceable to the more learned connoisseurs and erudite authorities on the matter of art.*"—MORNING POST.

Thring.—SCHOOL SONGS. A Collection of Songs for Schools. With the Music arranged for four Voices. Edited by the Rev. E. THRING and H. RICCIUS. Folio. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Tom Brown's School Days.—By AN OLD BOY.
Golden Treasury Edition, 4*s.* 6*d.* People's Edition, 2*s.*
With Seven Illustrations by A. HUGHES and SYDNEY HALL. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
"*The most famous boy's book in the language.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Tom Brown at Oxford.—New Edition. With Illustrations Crown 8vo. 6*s.*
"*In no other work that we can call to mind are the finer qualities of the English gentleman more happily portrayed.*"—DAILY NEWS.
"*A book of great power and truth.*"—NATIONAL REVIEW.

Tourgenief.—VIRGIN SOIL. By I. TOURGENIEF. Translated by ASHTON W. DILKE. Crown 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*
"*If we want to know Russian life and society in all its phases . . . we cannot do better than take up the works of the greatest of Russian novelists, and one of the greatest in all European literature, Ivan Tourgenief.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Trench.—Works by R. CHENEVIX TRENCH, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. (For other Works by this Author, see THEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, and PHILOSOPHICAL CATALOGUES.)

POEMS. Collected and arranged anew. Fcap. 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

HOUSEHOLD BOOK OF ENGLISH POETRY. Selected and arranged, with Notes, by Archbishop TRENCH. Second Edition. Extra fcap. 8vo. 5*s.* 6*d.*
"*The Archbishop has conferred in this delightful volume an important gift on the whole English-speaking population of the world.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

SACRED LATIN POETRY, Chiefly Lyrical. Selected and arranged for Use. By Archbishop TRENCH. Third Edition, Corrected and Improved. Fcap. 8vo. 7*s.*

Turner.—Works by the Rev. CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER :—
SONNETS. Dedicated to his Brother, the Poet Laureate. Fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*
SMALL TABLEAUX. Fcap. 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

Willoughby.—FAIRY GUARDIANS. A Book for the Young. By F. WILLOUGHBY. Illustrated. Crown 8vo. gilt. 5*s*.

"A dainty and delicious tale of the good old-fashioned type."—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Wolf.—THE LIFE AND HABITS OF WILD ANIMALS. Twenty Illustrations by JOSEPH WOLF, engraved by J. W. and E. WHYMPER. With descriptive Letter-press, by D. G. ELLIOT, F.L.S. Super royal 4to, cloth extra, gilt edges. 21*s*.

This is the last series of drawings which will be made by Mr. Wolf, either upon wood or stone. The PALL MALL GAZETTE *says: " The fierce, untamable side of brute nature has never received a more robust and vigorous interpretation, and the various incidents in which particular character is shown are set forth with rare dramatic power. For excellence that will endure, we incline to place this very near the top of the list of Christmas books." And the* ART JOURNAL *observes, " Rarely, if ever, have we seen animal life more forcibly and beautifully depicted than in this really splendid volume."*

Also, an Edition in royal folio, Proofs before Letters, each Proof signed by the Engravers.

Woolner.—MY BEAUTIFUL LADY. By THOMAS WOOLNER. With a Vignette by A. HUGHES. Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5*s*.

" No man can read this poem without being struck by the fitness and finish of the workmanship, so to speak, as well as by the chastened and unpretending loftiness of thought which pervades the whole." —GLOBE.

Words from the Poets. Selected by the Editor of " Rays of Sunlight." With a Vignette and Frontispiece. 18mo. limp., 1*s*.

" The selection aims at popularity, and deserves it."—GUARDIAN.

Yonge (C. M.)—Works by CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE. Twenty-third Edition. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

HEARTSEASE. Fifteenth Edition. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

THE DAISY CHAIN. Sixteenth Edition. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

THE TRIAL: MORE LINKS OF THE DAISY CHAIN. Fourteenth Edition. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

DYNEVOR TERRACE. Seventh Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

HOPES AND FEARS. Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Yonge (C. M.)—*continued.*

THE YOUNG STEPMOTHER. Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

CLEVER WOMAN OF THE FAMILY. Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

THE DOVE IN THE EAGLE'S NEST. Seventh Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*We think the authoress of 'The Heir of Redclyffe' has surpassed her previous efforts in this illuminated chronicle of the olden time.*" —BRITISH QUARTERLY.

THE CAGED LION. Illustrated. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"*Prettily and tenderly written, and will with young people especially be a great favourite.*"—DAILY NEWS. "*Everybody should read this.*"—LITERARY CHURCHMAN.

THE CHAPLET OF PEARLS; OR, THE WHITE AND BLACK RIBAUMONT. Crown 8vo. 6*s.* Sixth Edition.

"*Miss Yonge has brought a lofty aim as well as high art to the construction of a story which may claim a place among the best efforts in historical romance.*"—MORNING POST. "*The plot, in truth, is of the very first order of merit.*"—SPECTATOR. "*We have seldom read a more charming story.*"—GUARDIAN.

THE PRINCE AND THE PAGE. A Tale of the Last Crusade. Illustrated. Third Edition. 18mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

"*A tale which, we are sure, will give pleasure to many others besides the young people for whom it is specially intended. . . . This extremely prettily-told story does not require the guarantee afforded by the name of the author of 'The Heir of Redclyffe' on the title-page to ensure its becoming a universal favourite.*"—DUBLIN EVENING MAIL.

THE LANCES OF LYNWOOD. New Edition, with Coloured Illustrations. 18mo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

"*The illustrations are very spirited and rich in colour, and the story can hardly fail to charm the youthful reader.*"—MANCHESTER EXAMINER.

THE LITTLE DUKE: RICHARD THE FEARLESS. Sixth Edition. Illustrated. 18mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

A STOREHOUSE OF STORIES. First and Second Series. Globe 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

CONTENTS OF FIRST SERIES:—History of Philip Quarll—Goody Twoshoes—The Governess—Jemima Placid—The Perambulations of a Mouse—The Village School—The Little Queen—History of Little Jack.

MACMILLAN'S GOLDEN TREASURY SERIES.

UNIFORMLY printed in 18mo., with Vignette Titles by Sir NOEL PATON, T. WOOLNER, W. HOLMAN HUNT, J. E. MILLAIS, ARTHUR HUGHES, &c. Engraved on Steel by JEENS. Bound in extra cloth, 4*s.* 6*d.* each volume. Also kept in morocco and calf bindings.

"*Messrs. Macmillan have, in their Golden Treasury Series, especially provided editions of standard works, volumes of selected poetry, and original compositions, which entitle this series to be called classical. Nothing can be better than the literary execution, nothing more elegant than the material workmanship.*"—BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and LYRICAL POEMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. Selected and arranged, with Notes, by FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.

"*This delightful little volume, the Golden Treasury, which contains many of the best original lyrical pieces and songs in our language, grouped with care and skill, so as to illustrate each other like the pictures in a well-arranged gallery.*"—QUARTERLY REVIEW.

The Children's Garland from the best Poets. Selected and arranged by COVENTRY PATMORE.

"*It includes specimens of all the great masters in the art of poetry, selected with the matured judgment of a man concentrated on obtaining insight into the feelings and tastes of childhood, and desirous to awaken its finest impulses, to cultivate its keenest sensibilities.*"—MORNING POST.

The Book of Praise. From the Best English Hymn Writers. Selected and arranged by LORD SELBORNE. *A New and Enlarged Edition.*

"*All previous compilations of this kind must undeniably for the present give place to the Book of Praise. . . . The selection has been made throughout with sound judgment and critical taste. The pains involved in this compilation must have been immense, embracing, as it does, every writer of note in this special province of English literature, and ranging over the most widely divergent tracks of religious thought.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

The Fairy Book; the Best Popular Fairy Stories. Selected and rendered anew by the Author of "John Halifax, Gentleman."

"*A delightful selection, in a delightful external form; full of the physical splendour and vast opulence of proper fairy tales.*"—SPECTATOR.

The Ballad Book. A Selection of the Choicest British Ballads. Edited by WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

"*His taste as a judge of old poetry will be found, by all acquainted with the various readings of old English ballads, true enough to justify his undertaking so critical a task.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

The Jest Book. The Choicest Anecdotes and Sayings. Selected and arranged by MARK LEMON.

"*The fullest and best jest book that has yet appeared.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Bacon's Essays and Colours of Good and Evil. With Notes and Glossarial Index. By W. ALDIS WRIGHT, M.A.

"*The beautiful little edition of Bacon's Essays, now before us, does credit to the taste and scholarship of Mr. Aldis Wright. . . . It puts the reader in possession of all the essential literary facts and chronology necessary for reading the Essays in connection with Bacon's life and times.*"—SPECTATOR.

The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to come. By JOHN BUNYAN.

"*A beautiful and scholarly reprint.*"—SPECTATOR.

The Sunday Book of Poetry for the Young. Selected and arranged by C. F. ALEXANDER.

"*A well-selected volume of Sacred Poetry.*"—SPECTATOR.

A Book of Golden Deeds of All Times and All Countries Gathered and narrated anew. By the Author of "THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE."

"*. . . To the young, for whom it is especially intended, as a most interesting collection of thrilling tales well told; and to their elders, as a useful handbook of reference, and a pleasant one to take up when their wish is to while away a weary half-hour. We have seen no prettier gift-book for a long time.*"—ATHENÆUM.

The Poetical Works of Robert Burns. Edited, with Biographical Memoir, Notes, and Glossary, by ALEXANDER SMITH. Two Vols.

"*Beyond all question this is the most beautiful edition of Burns yet out.*"—EDINBURGH DAILY REVIEW.

The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. Edited from the Original Edition by J. W. CLARK, M.A. Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

"*Mutilated and modified editions of this English classic are so much the rule, that a cheap and pretty copy of it, rigidly exact to the original, will be a prize to many book-buyers.*"—EXAMINER.

The Republic of Plato. TRANSLATED into ENGLISH, with Notes by J. Ll. DAVIES, M.A. and D. J. VAUGHAN, M.A.

"*A dainty and cheap little edition.*"—EXAMINER.

The Song Book. Words and Tunes from the best Poets and Musicians. Selected and arranged by JOHN HULLAH, Professor of Vocal Music in King's College, London.

"*A choice collection of the sterling songs of England, Scotland, and Ireland, with the music of each prefixed to the Words. How much true wholesome pleasure such a book can diffuse, and will diffuse, we trust through manv thousand families.*"—EXAMINER.

La Lyre Française. Selected and arranged, with Notes, by GUSTAVE MASSON, French Master in Harrow School.

A selection of the best French songs and lyrical pieces.

Tom Brown's School Days. By AN OLD BOY.

"*A perfect gem of a book. The best and most healthy book about boys for boys that ever was written.*"—ILLUSTRATED TIMES.

A Book of Worthies. Gathered from the Old Histories and written anew by the Author of "THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE." With Vignette.

"*An admirable addition to an admirable series.*"—WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

A Book of Golden Thoughts. By HENRY ATTWELL, Knight of the Order of the Oak Crown.

"*Mr. Attwell has produced a book of rare value . . . . Happily it is small enough to be carried about in the pocket, and of such a companion it would be difficult to weary.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Guesses at Truth. By TWO BROTHERS. New Edition.

The Cavalier and his Lady. Selections from the Works of the First Duke and Duchess of Newcastle. With an Introductory Essay by EDWARD JENKINS, Author of "Ginx's Baby," &c.

"*A charming little volume.*"—STANDARD.

Theologia Germanica.—Which setteth forth many fair Lineaments of Divine Truth, and saith very lofty and lovely things touching a Perfect Life. Edited by DR. PFEIFFER, from the only complete manuscript yet known. Translated from the German, by SUSANNA WINKWORTH. With a Preface by the REV. CHARLES KINGSLEY, and a Letter to the Translator by the Chevalier Bunsen, D.D.

Milton's Poetical Works.—Edited, with Notes, &c., by PROFESSOR MASSON. Two vols. 18mo. 9*s*.

Scottish Song. A Selection of the Choicest Lyrics of Scotland. Compiled and arranged, with brief Notes, by MARY CARLYLE AITKIN.

"*Miss Aitkin's exquisite collection of Scottish Song is so alluring, and suggests so many topics, that we find it difficult to lay it down. The book is one that should find a place in every library, we haa almost said in every pocket, and the summer tourist who wishes to carry with him into the country a volume of genuine poetry, will find it difficult to select one containing within so small a compass so much of rarest value.*"—SPECTATOR.

Deutsche Lyrik.—The Golden Treasury of the best German Lyrical Poems, selected and arranged with Notes and Literary Introduction. By Dr. BUCHHEIM.

"*This collection of German poetry is compiled with care and conscientiousness. . . . . The result of his labours is satisfactory. Almost all the lyrics dear to English readers of German will be found in this little volume.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Robert Herrick.—SELECTIONS FROM THE LYRICAL POEMS OF. Arranged with Notes by F. T. PALGRAVE.

"*A delightful little book. Herrick, the English Catullus, is simply one of the most exquisite of poets, and his fame and memory are fortunate in having found one so capable of doing honour to them as the present editor; who contributes a charming dedication and a preface full of delicate and sensitive criticism to a volume than which one would hardly desire a choicer companion for a journey or for hours of ease in the country.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Poems of Places.—Edited by H. W. LONGFELLOW. England and Wales. Two Vols.

"*After a careful perusal we must pronounce his work an excellent collection. . . . In this compilation we find not only a guide-book for future travels, but a fund of reminiscences of the past. To many of us it will seem like a biography of our best and happiest emotions. . . . For those who know not all these places the book will be an excellent travelling companion or guide, or may even stand some in good stead in place of travel.*"—TIMES.

Matthew Arnold's Selected Poems.
Also a Large Paper Edition. Crown 8vo. 12*s*. 6*d*.

The Story of the Christians and Moors in Spain.—By CHARLOTTE M. YONGE. With a Vignette by HOLMAN HUNT.

Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare.—Edited with Preface by the Rev. ALFRED AINGER, Reader at the Temple.

MACMILLAN'S GLOBE LIBRARY.

Beautifully printed on toned paper and bound in cloth extra, gilt edges, price 4s. 6d. each; in cloth plain, 3s. 6d. Also kept in a variety of calf and morocco bindings at moderate prices.

BOOKS, Wordsworth says, are

"the spirit breathed
By dead men to their kind;"

and the aim of the publishers of the Globe Library has been to make it possible for the universal kin of English-speaking men to hold communion with the loftiest "spirits of the mighty dead;" to put within the reach of all classes *complete* and *accurate* editions, carefully and clearly printed upon the best paper, in a convenient form, at a moderate price, of the works of the MASTER-MINDS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, and occasionally of foreign literature in an attractive English dress.

The Editors, by their scholarship and special study of their authors, are competent to afford every assistance to readers of all kinds: this assistance is rendered by original biographies, glossaries of unusual or obsolete words, and critical and explanatory notes.

The publishers hope, therefore, that these Globe Editions may prove worthy of acceptance by all classes wherever the English Language is spoken, and by their universal circulation justify their distinctive epithet; while at the same time they spread and nourish a common sympathy with nature's most "finely touched" spirits, and thus help a little to "make the whole world kin."

The SATURDAY REVIEW *says: "The Globe Editions are admirable for their scholarly editing, their typographical excellence, their compendious form, and their cheapness." The* BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW *says: "In compendiousness, elegance, and scholarliness, the Globe Editions of Messrs. Macmillan surpass any popular series of our classics hitherto given to the public. As near an approach to miniature perfection as has ever been made."*

Shakespeare's Complete Works. Edited by W. G. CLARK, M.A., and W. ALDIS WRIGHT, M.A., of Trinity College,

Cambridge, Editors of the "Cambridge Shakespeare." With Glossary. Pp. 1,075.

The ATHENÆUM *says this edition is "a marvel of beauty, cheapness, and compactness. . . . For the busy man, above all for the working student, this is the best of all existing Shakespeares." And the* PALL MALL GAZETTE *observes: "To have produced the complete works of the world's greatest poet in such a form, and at a price within the reach of every one, is of itself almost sufficient to give the publishers a claim to be considered public benefactors."*

Spenser's Complete Works. Edited from the Original Editions and Manuscripts, by R. MORRIS, with a Memoir by J. W. HALES, M.A. With Glossary. pp. lv., 736.

"*Worthy—and higher praise it needs not—of the beautiful 'Globe Series.' The work is edited with all the care so noble a poet deserves.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Sir Walter Scott's Poetical Works. Edited with a Biographical and Critical Memoir by FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE, and copious Notes. pp. xliii., 559.

"*We can almost sympathise with a middle-aged grumbler, who, after reading Mr. Palgrave's memoir and introduction, should exclaim —'Why was there not such an edition of Scott when I was a schoolboy?'*"—GUARDIAN.

Complete Works of Robert Burns.—THE POEMS, SONGS, AND LETTERS, edited from the best Printed and Manuscript Authorities, with Glossarial Index, Notes, and a Biographical Memoir by ALEXANDER SMITH. pp. lxii., 636.

"*Admirable in all respects.*"—SPECTATOR. "*The cheapest, the most perfect, and the most interesting edition which has ever been published.*"—BELL'S MESSENGER.

Robinson Crusoe. Edited after the Original Editions, with a Biographical Introduction by HENRY KINGSLEY. pp. xxxi., 607.

"*A most excellent and in every way desirable edition.*"—COURT CIRCULAR. "*Macmillan's 'Globe' Robinson Crusoe is a book to have and to keep.*"—MORNING STAR.

Goldsmith's Miscellaneous Works. Edited, with Biographical Introduction, by Professor MASSON. pp. lx., 695.

"*Such an admirable compendium of the facts of Goldsmith's life, and so careful and minute a delineation of the mixed traits of his peculiar character as to be a very model of a literary biography in little.*"—SCOTSMAN.

Pope's Poetical Works. Edited, with Notes and Introductory Memoir, by ADOLPHUS WILLIAM WARD, M.A., Fellow of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and Professor of History in Owens College, Manchester. pp. lii., 508.

The LITERARY CHURCHMAN *remarks: "The editor's own notes and introductory memoir are excellent, the memoir alone would be cheap and well worth buying at the price of the whole volume."*

Dryden's Poetical Works. Edited, with a Memoir, Revised Text, and Notes, by W. D. CHRISTIE, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge. pp. lxxxvii., 662.

"*An admirable edition, the result of great research and of a careful revision of the text. The memoir prefixed contains, within less than ninety pages, as much sound criticism and as comprehensive a biography as the student of Dryden need desire.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Cowper's Poetical Works. Edited, with Notes and Biographical Introduction, by WILLIAM BENHAM, Vicar of Addington and Professor of Modern History in Queen's College, London. pp. lxxiii., 536.

"*Mr. Benham's edition of Cowper is one of permanent value. The biographical introduction is excellent, full of information, singularly neat and readable and modest—indeed too modest in its comments. The notes are concise and accurate, and the editor has been able to discover and introduce some hitherto unprinted matter. Altogether the book is a very excellent one.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Morte d'Arthur.—SIR THOMAS MALORY'S BOOK OF KING ARTHUR AND OF HIS NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE. The original Edition of CAXTON, revised for Modern Use. With an Introduction by Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Bart. pp. xxxvii., 509.

"*It is with perfect confidence that we recommend this edition of the ola romance to every class of readers.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

The Works of Virgil. Rendered into English Prose, with Introductions, Notes, Running Analysis, and an Index. By JAMES LONSDALE, M.A., late Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford, and Classical Professor in King's College, London; and SAMUEL LEE, M.A., Latin Lecturer at University College, London. pp. 288.

"*A more complete edition of Virgil in English it is scarcely possible to conceive than the scholarly work before us.*"—GLOBE.

The Works of Horace. Rendered into English Prose, with Introductions, Running Analysis, Notes, and Index. By JOHN LONSDALE, M.A., and SAMUEL LEE, M.A.

The STANDARD *says,* "*To classical and non-classical readers it will be invaluable as a faithful interpretation of the mind ana meaning of the poet, enriched as it is with notes and dissertations of the highest value in the way of criticism, illustration, and explanation.*"

Milton's Poetical Works.—Edited with Introductions by Professor MASSON.

"*A worthy addition to a valuable series.*"—ATHENÆUM.

"*In every way an admirable book.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE—*continued.*

THE CHAPLET OF PEARLS.
LADY HESTER; or, Ursula's Narrative.
THE THREE BRIDES. 2 Vols.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

YOUNG MUSGRAVE.
THE CURATE IN CHARGE.
A SON OF THE SOIL.

BY ANNIE KEARY.

CASTLE DALY.
OLDBURY.
A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE.

BY GEORGE FLEMING.

A NILE NOVEL.
MIRAGE.

TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS.
TOM BROWN AT OXFORD.
PAULINE. By G. C. CLUNES.
THE FOOL OF QUALITY. By H. BROOKE.
UNDER THE LIMES.
CHRISTINA NORTH.
ELSIE. By A. C. M.
REALMAH. By the Author of "Friends in Council."
PATTY. By Mrs. MACQUOID.
HUGH CRICHTON'S ROMANCE. By C. R. COLERIDGE.
OWEN GWYNNE'S GREAT WORK. By LADY AUGUSTA NOEL.
A SLIP IN THE FENS. Illustrated.
MY TIME, AND WHAT I'VE DONE WITH IT. By F C. BURNAND.
ROSE TURQUAND. By ELLICE HOPKINS.
OLD SIR DOUGLAS. By the Hon. Mrs. NORTON.
SEBASTIAN. By KATHERINE COOPER.

